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Security Council

Sixty-third year

Provisional

5953rd meeting

Sunday, 10 August 2008, 11.35 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Grauls	(Belgium)
Members:	Burkina Faso	Mr. Kafando
	China	Mr. La Yifan
	Costa Rica	Mr. Urbina
	Croatia	Mr. Skračić
	France	Mr. Lacroix
	Indonesia	Mr. Natalegawa
	Italy	Mr. Mantovani
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Ettalhi
	Panama	Mr. Arias
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	South Africa	Ms. Qwabe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Pierce
	United States of America	Mr. Khalilzad
	Viet Nam	Mr. Le Luong Minh

Agenda

The situation in Georgia

Letter dated 9 August 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2008/537)

Letter dated 10 August 2008 from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2008/538)

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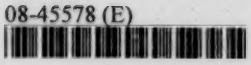

The meeting was called to order at 11.35 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Georgia

Letter dated 9 August 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2008/537)

Letter dated 10 August 2008 from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2008/538)

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Georgia, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Alasania (Georgia) took the seat reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Lynn Pascoe, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs.

It is so decided.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Edmund Mulet, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations.

It is so decided.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in response to a letter dated 9 August 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia and a letter dated 10 August 2008 from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America, contained in documents S/2008/537 and S/2008/538 respectively.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear briefings by Mr. Lynn Pascoe, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, and by Mr. Edmond Mulet, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations. I now give the floor to Mr. Pascoe.

Mr. Pascoe: I would like to begin by reading out the statement by the Secretary-General that was released fairly late last night; some members of the Council may not have received it at this point. The statement reads as follows:

> "The Secretary-General is alarmed by the escalation of hostilities in Georgia which have resulted in large numbers of casualties and massive destruction in South Ossetia and other regions of Georgia. The Secretary-General is particularly concerned about violence spreading to areas outside the zone of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict.
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> "The Secretary-General is profoundly concerned over mounting tensions in the Abkhaz zone of conflict, including the bombing of the Upper Kodori Valley and the ongoing military build-up along the security zone. In the context of the announcement by the Abkhaz de facto authorities of a military operation in the Upper Kodori Valley which could be dangerously destabilizing, he calls for the exercise of maximum restraint by all concerned as well as the guarantee of the safety and security of the unarmed United Nations military observers.
>
> "The Secretary-General urges all parties to immediately end hostilities and to engage, without delay, in negotiations to achieve a peaceful settlement. In this regard, the Secretary-General welcomes international efforts to assist the parties in resolving the situation. The Secretary-General believes that for the success of this endeavour, all armed contingents which are not authorized by respective agreements on South Ossetia should leave the zone of conflict. The Secretary-General urges all parties to respect the principle of the territorial integrity of States

enshrined in the Charter and to refrain from actions that could undermine efforts to settle the longstanding conflicts in Georgia. The Secretary-General also calls for immediate steps to be undertaken in order to address the humanitarian crisis.

"The Secretary-General strongly believes that a lasting solution can only be found by peaceful means."

Today, what I shall do is give a short briefing on the general issues that builds on the briefing that Assistant Secretary-General Mulet gave yesterday in the Security Council's consultations, and then Mr. Mulet will brief on the Abkhazia issue. That will be our division of labour.

As Mr. Mulet noted yesterday, the United Nations has no first-hand information from the area of the conflict in South Ossetia and largely relies on media reports. Since most of the Georgian Internet sites are blocked, the information therefore comes mostly from Russian media and other international sources.

Over the past few days, there has been a sharp escalation of hostilities in Georgia, which has spread to areas beyond the Georgian-Ossetian conflict.

The exact situation in Tskhinvali and other areas in South Ossetia remains difficult to ascertain due to a lack of United Nations or other international presence on the ground. In the afternoon, Georgian officials repeated an earlier announcement that Georgian troops have withdrawn from most of South Ossetia, including Tskhinvali. The Georgian side denied defeat and said it had to address a humanitarian catastrophe. According to news reports, the withdrawal was disputed by Russian military sources, who said that there are still Georgian military units and that sporadic fighting continues. Russian military sources have also said that there have been no contacts with Georgian military officials.

The media report ongoing clashes south of Tskhinvali. The Georgian authorities claimed that the Russian troops were moving towards Gori in Georgia proper, and Georgian troops started taking defensive position around the city. Interlocutors from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) informed United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) that approximately 2,000 ethnic Georgian internally displaced persons (IDPs) from South Ossetia have arrived in collective centres near Tbilisi and Gori, and many others are staying with relatives. The UNHCR expects up to 20,000 IDPs in the final analysis. The UNHCR believes that 5,000 have crossed into North Ossetia-Alania.

Today, early in the morning, Russian aircraft resumed attacks on strategic and military targets outside the zone of conflict, including a military airport, which includes a military aircraft repair factory, and a tank repair factory near Tbilisi, the port of Poti and targets near Gori. The bombing of the military airport situated 70 kilometres from Tbilisi has been confirmed by UNOMIG. Russian military officials confirmed the loss of two aircraft over Gori.

The United Nations Resident Coordinator has recommended international staff to evacuate. At this moment, however, no international staff members have as yet left Georgia.

And in the past hour the Georgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs reported that the Russian Embassy in Tbilisi had been given a note verbale containing the information that that Georgian forces are participating in a ceasefire in South Ossetia; it also states that all Georgian forces have left the zone of conflict, that they have created a humanitarian corridor to allow the evacuation of civilians and that they are ready for immediate talks with the Russian Federation.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Pascoe for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Edmond Mulet, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations.

Mr. Mulet: I will brief the Council on events related to the mandate and area of responsibility of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG). I would like to recall some information about the Mission itself. We have 136 military observers; we have 18 United Nations police personnel on the ground, and 311 civilians, in different sites. The key mandated tasks for this Mission are to monitor and verify the implementation by the parties of the 1994 ceasefire agreement, to contribute to the creation of conditions conducive to return of internally displaced persons and refugees, and to promote a political settlement of the conflict.

The situation in Abkhazia remains of extreme concern, with a military build-up continuing on the Abkhaz side of the zone of conflict, as well as bombings of the Upper Kodori Valley. Over the past two days, the Abkhaz side has moved troops and heavy weapons into the zone of conflict. Such movement was initially prevented by the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) peacekeeping force, but their commander, General Chaban, yesterday informed UNOMIG that they could no longer stop the Abkhaz from moving weapons and personnel into the zone. UNOMIG has confirmed that the CIS peacekeepers did not attempt to stop such deployments. Abkhaz troops and heavy weapons are now present all along the ceasefire line.

Yesterday morning, the Abkhaz de facto deputy defence minister requested that UNOMIG withdraw its observers from the Upper Kodori Valley, as their safety could no longer be guaranteed. UNOMIG then withdrew all 15 observers that had been present in the Upper Kodori Valley. Following the request for UNOMIG to leave the Upper Kodori Valley, the Abkhaz de facto authorities announced a decision, taken by de facto president Bagapsh, to push the Georgian armed forces out of the Upper Kodori Valley. Beginning yesterday afternoon, UNOMIG has reported ongoing acrial bombardments of Georgian villages in the Upper Kodori Valley. The Mission also observed the movement by the Abkhaz side of substantial numbers of heavy weapons and military personnel towards the Kodori Valley.

Earlier today, Abkhaz de facto president Bagapsh gave a press conference, where he announced that their operation in the Upper Kodori Valley was proceeding according to plan. He stated that Georgian civilians and armed personnel had both been given an ultimatum to leave the Upper Kodori Valley. Bagapsh also stated that his side was coordinating their activities with the CIS peacekeeping forces in order to restore order in the peacekeepers' area of responsibility. He said that Sukhumi had requested Russia to take measures to strengthen the Abkhaz maritime border. Negotiations with Georgia, he said, were only possible after the current Abkhaz operations were completed.

UNOMIG has received information from multiple sources that most of the civilian population of the Upper Kodori Valley has left. Throughout last night and today, UNOMIG has obtained information on an ongoing build-up of forces, both Abkhaz and Russian, in and near the zone of conflict. UNOMIG observed a Russian airborne battalion move towards the zone of conflict this morning. UNOMIG also reports that a number of Ilyushin-76 transport aeroplanes have landed at Sukhumi airport, beginning yesterday evening. It also appears that a number of Russian ships belonging to the Black Sea fleet have moved close to the coast of Abkhazia. Abkhaz forces and heavy weapons have been moved to the administrative border with Georgia across the entire zone of conflict. Bombings have taken place in the vicinity of the Georgian city of Zugdidi, causing panic among the local population, many of whom are trying to seek protection at the UNOMIG regional headquarters located there.

As a result of the increasing tension and the bombings in the Mission's area of operations, UNOMIG has had to scale down its operations and is now conducting only essential patrols. The Mission continues to liaise with the sides and with the CIS peacekeepers. For the time being, UNOMIG has not observed major movements of troops or weapons into the zone of conflict on the Georgian side. So far, the only actions observed have been reinforcements for existing positions along the ceasefire line.

Overall, with the exception of the bombing of the Upper Kodori Valley and of targets near Zugdidi, including the Senaki military base, no direct confrontations appear to have broken out as yet in our area of operations. UNOMIG has requested that the CIS peacekeepers provide security for its regional headquarters in Gali and Zugdidi.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Mulet for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of Georgia.

Mr. Alasania (Georgia): For the past 12 hours, the inhuman and indiscriminate aerial bombardment of Georgian territory has continued. The scale of the devastating destruction and loss of innocent life has yet to be assessed. An armed invasion by Russian ground troops has already been transformed into a full-scale occupation of parts of Georgian territory. The process of exterminating the Georgian population and annihilating Georgian statehood is in full swing: a 6,000-strong Russian occupying force with 100 tanks, 115 armoured military vehicles and 300 mortars has entered the Tskhinvali region from the Russian

Federation. A Russian regular military unit comprising 4,000 servicemen has been deployed in Ochamchir, a city close to the Upper Kodori that is under the control of the Abkhaz separatist regime. Villages in my country, most of them located well outside either zone of conflict, have been attacked several times. Three bombs have been dropped on the aviation plant in Tbilisi; as a result, it has been totally destroyed. The airfield located in western Georgia, at Kopitnari, has also been attacked. Russian jets have attacked Zugdidi. In addition, Gachiani, in the Gardabani district, 20 kilometres south-west of the capital and also outside the conflict zone, has been bombed; it is close to the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline.

The Russian air force continues to bomb Gori, located 60 kilometres north-west of Tbilisi. The city of Oni, in the western part of the country, has been bombed several times. The port of Poti, located on the coast of the Black Sea 360 kilometres west of Tbilisi — which is, of course, outside the conflict zone — has been heavily bombed. The Russian navy has prevented a humanitarian cargo ship carrying wheat from entering the Poti port; the ship was forced to go back. Other Russian battleships have been deployed in order to enforce the blockade against Georgia.

One of the pilots detained has testified that pilots in general have been instructed to carry out an unlimited number of overflights and indiscriminate bombardment, which clearly reflect elements of war crimes. Russia is forcing Abkhaz separatists into the conflict, compelling them to open up another warfront, as described by the Secretariat. Attacks on Uta confirm that they are seriously preparing for an assault on Kodori. Russian planes have bombed the villages of Avadhara and Bilisi, in Upper Abkhazia. There are signs that the attacks will continue, and, as noted by the Secretariat, the claims made by the de facto Abkhaz authorities have been translated into reality. The Russian air force has bombarded Chkhalta, the administrative centre of Abkhazia. Four thousand Russian troops from Sebastopol have landed at the port of Ochamchira, on the Black Sea.

All of this means that Russia is continuing its full-scale offensive. As a result of deliberate inaction on the part of the Russian peacekeeping forces, a military unit has passed through the conflict zone, as has already been stated here. That fact was confirmed today by the Secretariat. The population of the Upper Kodori Valley is facing an imminent threat. We strongly urge all members of the Security Council to advise the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) to find a way to resume its monitoring of Upper Abkhazia, because that is the only way to save the civilian population there.

As stated numerous times yesterday by the Russian leadership and in diplomatic circles, it appears that Russia has its own justification for an all-out invasion. First, we have heard repeatedly that the Georgian side violated agreements. From the same point of departure, the Russian assertion is that they are engaging in peacemaking, or so-called peace enforcement. That is truly in the category of absurdity and nonsense. The actions of the Russian side have no foundation, either in existing agreements or in international law. The question is being asked whether Russia is trying to replace the Security Council, when in reality it is an aggressor in this conflict.

As has been stated here, the Georgian leadership reached out overnight to the Russian political leadership. Unfortunately, the President of the Russian Federation refused to directly engage with his Georgian counterpart in dialogue. In order to visibly demonstrate the seriousness of our ceasefire offer, the Georgian Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Tbilisi, as indicated here, conveyed a note verbale to the envoy of the Russian Federation indicating that the President of Georgia had issued a declaration to cease all military activities in South Ossetia. All Georgian troops have been withdrawn from the conflict zone, and the Georgian side has opened a humanitarian corridor south of Tskhinvali to allow the peaceful population and the wounded peaceful population to leave the conflict zone. During the ceasefire, Georgian forces have been bombed many times and prevented from making a full withdrawal.

Georgia calls upon this institution, the highest legitimate international authority in the world, for an immediate diplomatic and humanitarian intervention to protect Georgia from the ongoing Russian aggression and occupation. We should all act immediately to prevent further loss of human life.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of the United States.

Mr. Khalilzad (United States of America): The United States has asked for this emergency meeting in

view of dramatic and dangerous developments over the past 24 hours in and around Georgia.

First, there has been an intensification of Russian military activity in the South Ossetian region. This includes an influx of many thousands of troops beyond the several hundred Russian peacekeepers present when this crisis began. Military operations against Georgian forces in the conflict zone have escalated dramatically.

Secondly, the conflict has expanded. A Russian-backed military offensive has been launched in the Abkhazia region of Georgia. This was preceded by a demand from the Abkhaz for the peacekeeping presence of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) to be withdrawn from the Kodori Valley, which has since been bombed. This is a direct challenge to the mission mandated by the Security Council. Let there be no confusion about the significance of this point. Some Abkhaz officials have stated their intention to drive Georgia militarily out of the Upper Kodori Valley. Moreover, Russia has been attacking villages and cities elsewhere in Georgia, including threatening the Zugdidi region and launching air attacks against Tbilisi airport. Russian military attacks have also destroyed critical Georgian infrastructure, including seaports, airports and other facilities.

Thirdly, the result of this escalation against a sovereign State that has not posed a direct threat to Russia has increased the number of casualties and the humanitarian suffering of the people of Georgia, including in South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

Fourthly, against this backdrop of heightened violence, the Russian forces are actually impeding the withdrawal of Georgian forces from South Ossetia. This is an unconscionable effort to continue the conflict and prevent the Georgians from taking concrete steps to de-escalate the situation.

Fifthly, we continue to face the intransigent rejection by Russia of efforts to stop the violence. Georgia has offered a ceasefire and a restoration of the status quo of 6 August, but Russia rejects this reasonable position.

Finally, Russia continues to resist efforts by the international community to mediate this conflict, which is now clearly and unquestionably one between Russia and Georgia.

In view of this deteriorating situation, we need to ask ourselves what the Council can do to stop the violence, to stop the aggression and to return to the status quo of 6 August.

First, we have to draw the appropriate conclusions about what this conflict is and what it is not. Russia has claimed that these military operations were intended to protect its peacekeepers and the civilian population in South Ossetia. Yet its reaction goes far beyond any reasonable measure required to do so. Indeed, its escalation of the conflict has been the immediate cause of increased loss of innocent life and humanitarian suffering. Since Russia is impeding Georgian forces from withdrawing, rejecting a ceasefire and continuing to carry out military attacks against civilian centres, its claims of a humanitarian purpose are clearly not credible. Similarly, its expansion of the conflict to another separatist area in Georgia and attacks on the areas around Georgia's capital, Tbilisi, suggest other motives and objectives.

Secondly, we must condemn Russia's military assault on the sovereign State of Georgia and the violation of that country's sovereignty and territorial integrity, including the targeting of civilians and the campaign of terror against the Georgian population. Similarly, we need to condemn the destruction of Georgian infrastructure.

Thirdly, the Council must do what it can to ensure adherence to the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and take actions to address this threat to international peace and security. That means respect for Article 2, paragraph 4, which calls for all States Members of the United Nations to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State.

Therefore, we believe that the Council needs to take urgent action calling for an immediate ceasefire and the withdrawal of all forces to the status quo of 6 August. This applies particularly to Russian combat forces that have been brought in over the past week. We cannot remain indifferent to this point. We have begun consulting with others in the Security Council and expect that a draft resolution calling for an immediate ceasefire will be introduced shortly.

Fourthly, I urge the Russian Federation to carefully consider the implications of this aggression against the sovereign and democratic State of Georgia. Russia's relations with the United States and others in

the international community will be affected by its continued assault on Georgia and its refusal to contribute to a peaceful solution of this crisis.

The President (*spoke in French*): I shall now give the floor to those Council members who wish to make statements.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): First of all, I would like to express my thanks for the briefings given by Under-Secretary-General Pascoe and Assistant Secretary-General Mulet. Unfortunately, I have to point out that the content of the briefing by Mr. Pascoe shows that the Secretariat and its leadership have not been able to adopt an objective position showing a thorough grasp of the substance of this conflict, as should be expected from the leadership of such an authoritative international organization.

Over the past several days, we have held three open meetings of the Security Council because of the situation that arose due to the aggression by Georgia against South Ossetia. I would like to recall the fact that this series of meetings began with a meeting held at the initiative of the Russian Federation. We not only proposed that meeting, but we insisted that it be an open meeting, because we had something to say about what is taking place. Today's meeting, as the President has said, is taking place on the joint initiative of Georgia and the United States of America, which is in no way surprising. We all know how close the relations established between the leaders of those two States in recent years are.

In one of our previous meetings, the Permanent Representative of Georgia named seven of supposedly Russian citizens who are allegedly working in various capacities in South Ossetia and presented that as some sort of proof that Russia was governing the whole of South Ossetia. According to my information at least 127 advisers from the United States Department of Defense alone are working in Georgia at the present time. I cannot give their names, but I am sure the Permanent Representative of Georgia knows the names of those advisers, to say nothing of other types of advisers.

On 7 August — precisely the day on which Georgia subsequently launched its military attack against South Ossetia — a large-scale joint American-Georgian military exercise concluded involving some 1,000 American troops. Tellingly, the name of this joint exercise was "Immediate response". So our United States colleagues and our Georgian colleagues have been immediately putting to use the training that they had received.

What is taking place now is far from unexpected. As members will recall, on many occasions the Russian Federation drew attention to the dangerous situation that was evolving around Abkhazia and South Ossetia. On many occasions the Russian Federation drew attention to the fact that Georgia was building up its weapons, including offensive weapons, at an increasing rate. Georgia is the world record holder in the increase of its military budget, which over recent years has grown thirtyfold. Now we understand what the purpose of all that was.

I shall now return to the events that we are discussing today. Let me recall that everything began on the night of 7 August, but I shall return to that theme later. When I speak of the close cooperation between the United States and Georgia, we should not like to believe or to think that the United States gave the green light to the rash military action by the Georgian leadership. We are in close contact with the United States, and — I shall come back to this later — despite what Ambassador Khalilzad said with regard to our cooperation and our cooperation with other partners in the international community, that cooperation will, of course, continue, so as to return peace to Georgia.

Allow me to return to the events that we are currently discussing. The Georgian aggression against South Ossetia began on the night of 7 to 8 August. When it began, our military forces contacted the military leadership in Georgia. The Georgian representative stated that they were beginning a war against South Ossetia, and the commander of the Georgia peacekeeping contingent, Mr. Khurashvili, publicly explained that Georgia was undertaking a so-called restoration of constitutional order in South Ossetia. So, they were resolving a conflict that had lasted longer than 15 years by military means. Georgian military forces started firing against South Ossetia with artillery including Grad multiple rocket launchers. These systems were used in a barbaric way, since, as everybody knows, they do not have accurate targeting systems; they are used to fire at large areas. Therefore, there was a large loss of civilian life.

At the same time, the military action by Georgia began when they started to attack our peacekeepers and to seize the towns where our peacekeepers live. They attacked with tanks, aircraft and heavy artillery. As members know, there have been deaths and casualties among our peacekeepers: 12 of our peacekeepers died on the first day.

So how can we describe this action by the Georgian leadership? It has been said that aggression is only when one party attacks another. But if the aggression is carried out against your own people, is that in any way better? What legal terms can be used to describe what has been done by the Georgian leadership? Can we use "ethnic cleansing", for example, when, over a number of days, nearly 30,000 of the 120,000 people of South Ossetia have become refugees who have fled to Russia: more than a quarter of the population. They went across the border from South Ossetia to the North at great risk to their lives. Is that ethnic cleansing or is it not? Should we describe that as genocide or not? When out of that population of 120,000, 2,000 innocent civilians die on the first day, is that genocide or is it not? How many people, how many civilians must die before we describe it as genocide?

Today, as President Saakashvili did yesterday on television, the Permanent Representative of Georgia spoke sorrowfully about the death of innocent civilians in Georgia, and of course the death of any civilian is naturally a cause of great concern and regret. But why were they not saddened when Tskhinvali was wiped from the face of the Earth, along with 10 villages on the border between South Ossetia and Georgia? How should we react to all of that? How should we in the international community react when, despite all the international agreements that exist — and let me recall that our peacekeepers are in South Ossetia in accordance with the Dagomys agreement of 1992, which was signed by Georgia and South Ossetia — they are attacking directly and are trying to annihilate civilians, most of whom are Russian citizens? What did they expect? Did they expect our peacekeepers to run away, as some peacekeepers ran away from Srebrenica? We could not allow that to happen. We could not leave the civilian population in South Ossetia in dire straits or leave our peacekeepers without protection. So, additional troops were sent to Georgia, and they are still engaged in the task of removing Georgia from South Ossetia.

Let me say that we are not occupying territory that does not belong to South Ossetia. There has been talk today of the area of action and of the appropriateness and reasonableness of our action. Well, our action was appropriate for 16 years according to the Dagomys agreement. We operated perfectly well as peacekeepers when the Georgian side was behaving properly. Now, tell me, was the Georgian side acting properly when it committed this act of aggression? Let us all behave properly, and then we can start talking about what constitutes proper behaviour. Any military person knows — and not only military people, I think — that when such an operation is conducted, places are targeted not only within the immediate zone of conflict, but sometimes also beyond that area: those areas that support military action are targeted.

We have seen that on many occasions in many situations. If we look at Kosovo, nobody there limited themselves by any definitions of what Kosovo was. They simply started to bomb Belgrade and bridges over the Danube that were many miles from the area of conflict. I categorically reject the suggestion that we are conducting military operations in an indiscriminate way. Mr. Alasania ventured to make a reference by way of argument to a "statement" that allegedly was made by a Russian prisoner of war when being interrogated in Georgia, that he had allegedly been instructed to tell our pilot to fire indiscriminately. Such comments are absolutely outrageous and unacceptable at an open meeting of the Security Council.

The statement made by Ambassador Khalilzad with regard to terror against the civilian population is absolutely unacceptable, particularly from the lips of the Permanent Representative of a country whose actions we are aware of, including with regard to civilian populations in Iraq, Afghanistan and Serbia. So if indeed we would like to find a military solution to this conflict, then let us try to find serious political solutions, and not indulge in propaganda, even if perhaps some politicians would like that. Whatever your policy might be, please do not undertake to engage in propaganda activities in the Security Council.

I would like to turn specifically to two issues. With respect to the Kodori Valley, the simplest thing would be to invite the Abkhaz representatives. On many occasions, we have said that the representatives of Abkhazia should come here and explain their position. Now they are making public statements, and,

of course, they could have clearly explained the situation here. Now, in Abkhazia, how do you think the Abkhaz feel when South Ossetia is being wiped off the face of the Earth, in a similar conflict on Georgian territory? Did we not draw attention to the unacceptable situation in the southern part of the Kodori Valley. That was in contradiction to the Moscow agreements of 1994, and many resolutions of the Security Council. So why are people so surprised now?

With regard to the activities of the Black Sea fleet, I can inform the Council that indeed ships of the Black Sea fleet of the Russian Federation have started to patrol the sea along the coast of Abkhazia near the zone of the armed conflict in South Ossetia A note has been sent to the Georgian authorities in that regard. The aim of that operation is to ensure that we protect Russian citizens who are in that region, to provide support to the Russian peacekeeping contingent if there should be a military attack against them, and also to provide humanitarian assistance to the civilian population who are in the zone of conflict.

With the aim of preventing armed incidents in the area patrolled by Russian vessels, we have established a security zone. These actions do not seek to establish a maritime blockade of Georgia. Force will be used only in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter, in exercise of the right to self-defence by the Russian Federation.

Now, what about the way forward? What decisions should be taken? What can the international community do? First of all, we heard the strange statement that the Russian Federation was rejecting all international efforts. Of course, it is not: the fact is that President Medvedev had good talks with President Bush yesterday or the day before; our Minister for Foreign Affairs is in constant telephone contact with the Secretary of State of the United States — I think they have had five or six conversations over the past 36 hours, the most recent of them, within the past few hours, of 45 minutes in duration. We are talking to everyone, and we are explaining everything to everyone. We are listening to everyone, including representatives of the European States and the representatives of many European institutions. So, the international community can indeed play an appropriate role here.

With respect to the Permanent Representative of Georgia's outrage that our President had refused to speak with the President of Georgia. Excuse me, but what decent person would talk to him now? For years we have been explaining to him that any attempt to resolve the conflict by military means would be suicide for Georgia and that we would not permit South Ossetia and Abkhazia to be wiped off the face of the Earth or its people chased out of the Republic of Georgia. That has been clear from the first contact between President Saakashvili and the Russian President right to this very moment. He assured us — and stated publicly to the international community — that that was far from his intention and that he had no intention whatsoever to use force against his own people.

But this, of course, does not mean that we are evading any contacts with our Georgian colleagues. Such contacts are continuing at a wide variety of levels. For example, the most recent was just a few hours ago: a lengthy telephone conversation between our Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Georgia. What, then, is the problem here? Once again, we in the Security Council are facing this issue.

For some reason, the clearest statement about a ceasefire and peace-loving intentions was made not by the Permanent Representative of Georgia but by the Permanent Representative of the United States. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Georgia is speaking to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Russia. Our Minister for Foreign Affairs has stated very clearly all that I said yesterday both to my Security Council colleagues and publicly: Georgia — the Georgian military — must withdraw from South Ossetian territory, and Georgia must state its readiness to sign an agreement on the non-use of force in South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Then comes the complicated process of discussing all the other issues, including, at the appropriate time, the attainment of a political solution. That will be made much more difficult, of course, following Georgia's adventurist actions.

What do they say in response? They say, "We have already left". But we know that they have not left South Ossetia: after all, they are still firing on our soldiers. If they want to leave, I can assure the Council that we will not prevent Georgian military forces from withdrawing. I assure the Council that neither the South Ossetians nor we have any use for the Georgian

military on the territory of South Ossetia. So, please do not tell us that the Under-Secretary-General or anyone else said this, that or the other thing.

We have heard many comments from the Georgian side, including very militaristic statements and including a declaration of martial law and an announcement of a general mobilization in Georgia. Yes, we have heard all of that.

Let us state clearly that we are ready to put an end to the war, that we are still withdrawing from South Ossetia, and that we will sign an agreement on the non-use of force. This is a serious approach, Mr. Khalilzad, not one that circumvents the Security Council. By the way, Mr. Khalilzad said that they were discussing this with colleagues. Perhaps he could have discussions with Russian colleagues if he wants a document to be adopted by the Security Council. That would be a serious approach, rather than a propagandistic one that might be to the liking of some United States presidential candidate or someone else in the United States political establishment.

Let us deal with this truly tragic situation in a serious way. There are serious decisions that can be taken; these can be adopted immediately — right now. But they must first be adopted in Tbilisi, then by Russia and then, I hope, by the entire international community. That will help Georgia exit from the very difficult situation in which it finds itself as a result of the adventurist policies of its leadership.

Mr. Lacroix (France) (*spoke in French*): I wish first of all to thank Under-Secretary-General Pascoe and Assistant Secretary-General Mulet for their briefings, and to reaffirm our full confidence in them and our support for them and for all members of the Secretariat and the Secretariat leadership.

My delegation regrets that it is obliged to note once again that the situation in Georgia has deteriorated. We are particularly alarmed by the expansion of the conflict, both in intensity and in geographical scope, including with continued air strikes against targets outside the area of South Ossetia, the presence of significant maritime forces along the coast and the threat to the region of Abkhazia.

According to the information we have received, there have also been aerial attacks on the Kodori Valley, a build-up of Abkhaz troops and military equipment in the area of the line of demarcation between Abkhazia and the rest of Georgia, and a threat of major military operations by the Abkhaz side. We are also gravely concerned at the consequences of this deteriorating situation: an increasing number of victims, refugees and displaced persons. In that regard, the figures cited by Mr. Pascoe are particularly alarming. We are also gravely concerned at the possible implications of this deteriorating situation for the peace and stability of the region.

Everything possible must be done to put an end to this conflict. The priority is an immediate cessation of hostilities. We have taken note of Georgia's announcement of the withdrawal of its forces from Ossetia and of Georgia's cessation of hostilities; that is an important step. All parties must cease hostilities immediately, and everything possible must be done to achieve a lasting resolution of the situation.

I have already referred to the diplomatic efforts undertaken by France, both in its national capacity and as current President of the European Union. The mediation mission undertaken by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the European Union, with the participation of the United States, has travelled to Georgia. The French Minister for Foreign Affairs is to visit Moscow and Tbilisi, and the French President has submitted a simple plan for emerging from this crisis. It is based on three elements: an immediate cessation of hostilities; full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia; and restoration of the status quo preceding the hostilities, which would mean the withdrawal of Russian and Georgian forces to their earlier positions.

We consider that those elements are the essential parameters for resolving the crisis. Once we meet the conditions for attaining those objectives, a plan for international engagement could be put in place. It will be necessary to fine-tune its modalities. There is no doubt that the Security Council will be involved in that exercise.

Before we get there, I would like to say that the Security Council bears a significant responsibility that it must shoulder: to support the ongoing diplomatic efforts and to call for an immediate cessation of hostilities, for a withdrawal of forces to their earlier positions and for respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia.

Others have said before me, and I too would like to emphasize, that it is important for the Security Council rapidly to speak out on the basis of those elements. France plans to work actively in the coming hours to ensure that the Security Council is indeed able to speak out in this manner. I think the time has come for us all to shoulder our responsibility and to end a deteriorating process that is likely to have serious consequences for international peace and security.

Ms. Pierce (United Kingdom): I thank you, Mr. President, for calling this meeting today. I also thank the Under-Secretary-General and the Assistant Secretary-General for their briefings. The Secretariat, the United Nations and the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) are doing a difficult job in very difficult circumstances.

Before beginning my remarks, I would like to reject the allegation by the Russian ambassador that the Secretariat, and the Under-Secretary-General in particular, are biased. We have a convention in this Council that we rely on the information given to us by the Secretariat. An attack on the Secretariat is an attack on the institutions of the United Nations. And Russia, which is fast becoming a party to the conflict, is ill-placed to make such a claim, and it does it no credit.

As others have said, we are witnessing a grave escalation of the situation in Georgia. Further fighting has happened over night, and there has been further Russian bombing of Georgian territory. Russian naval vessels have moved closer, and there are media reports that they are tasked with preventing supplies to Georgia; there are concerns that supplies may not get through to other countries in the Caucasus.

Overnight, Russian bombing included an attack on the military airfield near the civilian airport outside Tbilisi. In a meeting on 10 August with delegations from the European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the United States, the Georgian Foreign Minister confirmed that the Georgian side has pulled back from most of South Ossetia and that Georgia has disengaged from Russian forces. She also said that Russian forces have told Georgia to negotiate a ceasefire with the proper person. Saakashvili has tried to contact Putin, but we understand that there has been no reply for several hours, and we heard from Ambassador Churkin why that is the case. I will merely make the obvious point that if leaders are not prepared to talk to each other, it is rather hard to see how peace efforts can move forward.

We have heard disturbing reports that there will only be a ceasefire once the Georgians have committed to a non-use-of-force agreement and have withdrawn completely from South Ossetia. Meanwhile, there are reports that other speakers have referred to of Russian forces striking Zugdidi in Georgia proper and of Abkhaz armed personnel movements.

We appreciate that it is difficult to get authoritative accounts of what is happening on the ground, as UNOMIG has been forced to pull back and Russian forces throughout Georgia have, through their actions on the ground, caused international monitors to have to leave. Our embassy is having trouble getting access to its own premises in Tbilisi because of the Russian actions, and we understand that there are foreign nationals, including British nationals, who may be trapped in parts of the conflict zone. We look to all the combatants to protect foreign nationals and other civilians. We will need corridors so that they can be safely evacuated, and we hold all the combatants responsible for the safety of our citizens.

Ambassador Churkin says there is no military solution, but we heard this morning from Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Karasin that the situation requires — and he used the present tense — a military intervention. We also heard from Prime Minister Putin about a "fatal blow" being delivered to the territorial integrity of Georgia.

We are witnessing, it appears, a grave violation of Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Russian forces have certainly violated respect for the international norms of peacekeeping, and it is a gross distortion by Russia to claim peacekeeping duties as the reason for their actions. Those actions have gone beyond any reasonable, proportionate response.

Instead of cold war rhetoric, we need the Russian representative to give us answers to the following questions: Why can Russia not support a cessation of hostilities and a withdrawal of all armed personnel, including their own regular and irregular forces, to positions pertaining on 6 August? What are Russia's political and military intentions in respect of Georgia? And what are Russia's political and military intentions in respect of Abkhazia and South Ossetia in Georgia, once the fighting has stopped?

What we have heard today from the Secretariat casts doubt on Russia's claims that their actions are humanitarian or designed to uphold peace and security in the Caucasus.

I would like also to reject the equivalence the Russian ambassador sought to establish between the situation in Georgia and that in Kosovo in 1998 and 1999. The situations are very different, but if the Russian actions are reminiscent of any party in that conflict, it is certainly not NATO that their actions remind us of.

As other speakers have said, we endorse the strong statement of the Secretary-General last night. I would like to echo what the French presidency of the European Union said: we repeat our calls here in the Chamber for an immediate and unconditional end by all parties, irregular and regular forces, to hostilities. We call on the Russian and Georgian sides and all the other parties to engage with the international mediation efforts, those led by the European Union, the OSCE and the United States, and to withdraw to positions of before 6 August. We call for all to respect the principles of the United Nations Charter. We call for Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity to be respected. We also call for humanitarian needs to be addressed. But that must not be used as pretext by the Russian authorities to keep their forces on Georgian territory or to insert further troops. We need urgently to establish an international presence on the ground to assist efforts at peace, monitor the ceasefire and help protect civilians.

In respect of Abkhazia in Georgia, we express our strong support of UNOMIG and condemn hostilities in and around Abkhazia. These are in contravention of the ceasefire agreement of 1994. If it is indeed the case that Russian forces are moving on Zugdidi, then they should leave. All parties should honour their obligations under previous Security Council resolutions on Abkhazia. It is extremely concerning that there are reports of Commonwealth of Independent States peacekeepers doing nothing to stop or inhibit offensive movements by Abkhaz armed personnel. That, too, vitiates the purpose of international peacekeeping. We call on Russia to use its influence over those in Abkhazia who are intent on broadening the conflict.

Finally, we have heard from a couple of delegations here this morning that they propose to bring forward action in the Security Council to support a cessation of hostilities. My Government will do everything it can to support those moves.

Mr. Mantovani (Italy): I wish first of all to reconfirm our full confidence in the impartiality and objectivity of the Secretariat and to express our thanks to Under-Secretary-General Pascoe and Assistant Secretary-General Mulet for their valuable briefings.

While we have clarified our position in all the previous open meetings and consultations of the Security Council, three or four times already, I would like again to add our voice to support the unconditional restoration of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia, as a first step. I would like also to call for the immediate cessation of hostilities and the restoration of the situation prevailing prior to 6 August. I would thus like to call for an immediate end to all ground, air and sea operations in the area.

From that perspective, we wish to express support for the joint mediation efforts of the European Union and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and for the specific ideas outlined by the French presidency of the European Union. We believe that the extension of the hostilities to Abkhazia is a further source of deep concern and that all parties must immediately comply with resolution 1808 (2008) in all its aspects.

We welcome the opening of a humanitarian area to protect civilians from the consequences of these events and to ease suffering in this very difficult situation.

Finally, we believe that the gravity of the situation requires immediate action by the Security Council.

Mr. Skračić (Croatia): Allow me to start, like other colleagues, by thanking Under-Secretary-General Pascoe and Assistant Secretary-General Mulet for their briefings.

This is the third time that we have met in this Chamber in as many days on the situation in Georgia. My delegation has expressed and continues to express its grave concerns at recent developments in that country. The situation in the conflict zone in South Ossetia, Georgia, seems to be getting worse; reports indicate that heavy fighting between Georgian and Russian armed forces continues unabated. All of that

has culminated in the Georgian parliament's declaration of a state of war.

Croatia is also extremely concerned by the introduction of large numbers of Russian troops into the conflict area of South Ossetia, Georgia, and now into the Abkhazia region of Georgia. Let me be clear: Croatia fully supports and respects the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Georgia and sees the violation of its borders as totally unacceptable.

In that regard, and as we have stated on previous occasions in this Chamber, we understand that the Russian Federation takes seriously its obligations as a peacekeeper in Georgia's region of South Ossetia, and we welcome that fact. However, we feel strongly that its actions in the past days go far beyond the role of a peacekeeper as foreseen in the 1992 armistice agreement among Georgian, Russian and South Ossetian leaders.

Moreover, Croatia is very concerned about the escalation of the conflict and its widening to other areas of Georgia not connected with the situation in South Ossetia. We feel strongly that a country purporting to act as a peacekeeper in one region of another sovereign State should not be using its military to target military and civilian targets in another, completely unrelated region of the same sovereign State, whatever the reasoning. We are extremely concerned by the fact that efforts to de-escalate the conflict through direct diplomatic links between Georgia and Russia or between the authorities of the separatist regions in Georgia are not making any real progress.

Croatia calls once again on all sides to immediately and unconditionally agree to a ceasefire and to refrain from further acts of provocation. We believe that it would be very difficult to have a return to the situation of 6 August, before the hostilities began, and a restoration of the status quo ante during that time if a ceasefire cannot be agreed to. Both Georgia and Russia need to withdraw their forces following the establishment of a ceasefire and then to re-engage in diplomatic and political efforts to resolve outstanding issues.

We welcome the Georgian decision to withdraw its forces from South Ossetia and hope that that signals the start of talks among Georgian, South Ossetian and Russian authorities. At the same time, we are disturbed by reports that the retreating Georgian troops are being fired upon. Russia needs to be a credible partner in this process. It should not be leveraging its position to the detriment of any of the parties within Georgia and, in particular, should not dictate the outcome of talks between Georgian and South Ossetian authorities or between Georgian and Abkhazian authorities.

We welcome the joint mission of the European Union and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) that went to Georgia yesterday and sincerely hope that through its efforts it will be able to broker a much-needed ceasefire and return to negotiations. We especially support the ongoing role and activities of the OSCE in the South Ossetian region of Georgia as an impartial mediator, and we believe that the offer of the use of its good offices should be taken up by all sides to the conflict.

Finally, my delegation deplores the most recent actions taken by the de facto authorities of Georgia's Abkhazia region in the Upper Kodori Valley vis-à-vis the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) and the shelling of Georgian villages. Those authorities should not be exacerbating an already fragile situation elsewhere in the country by pre-empting the use of force. We hope that the authorities of the Abkhaz region of Georgia will refrain from further hostile acts and will allow UNOMIG to return to that region, in line with resolutions of the Security Council and existing agreements.

One more thing: my delegation too will be ready to support action by the Council as proposed by the delegations of France and the United Kingdom.

Mr. Le Luong Minh (Viet Nam): I thank Under-Secretary-General Pascoe and Assistant Secretary-General Mulet for their briefings. However, I take note of the fact that, as they said, given the prevailing situation it is difficult to gather information

We are concerned about the continued escalation of the hostilities in the conflict zones in the context of the Georgian-South Ossetian conflict, which has resulted in numerous casualties among civilians and peacekeepers as well as in massive destruction of public and private property. We call upon all parties concerned to exercise the utmost restraint, to strictly observe the agreements that they have signed and to return to negotiations with a view to finding a mutually acceptable solution to the conflict, on the basis of respect for and due consideration of one another's legitimate interests. We strongly urge the parties

concerned to allow and facilitate humanitarian activities to help the affected populations. Finally, we continue to support international efforts to help resolve the conflict.

Mr. Urbina (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to begin by thanking Mr. Pascoe for his statement this morning and by reaffirming my delegation's absolute confidence in the excellent work that he has accomplished. I also thank Mr. Mulet and the Permanent Representative of Georgia for their statements.

Like other delegations, Costa Rica believes that the Secretary-General's statement reflects the chief concerns of members of the Security Council regarding this conflict, whose potential for regional destabilization could lead to an extremely grave situation. The Secretary-General accurately reflects the conviction of the overwhelming majority of Members of the Organization that only a peaceful and political solution, not a military one, can put an end to this conflict. Costa Rica regrets the scale that the hostilities have reached and deplores the fact that they have spread beyond the conflict zone. We are convinced of the need for moderation on all sides, including that of the Russian Federation, whose active participation in this conflict threatens to transform it into a crisis of international dimensions.

We do not believe that the repetition of mutual accusations and the use of language that is truly aggressive in any way helps to calm spirits or open up options aimed at restoring peace. The repeated use of terms such as "genocide", "ethnic cleansing" and "war crimes" should give rise to reflection. In that regard, we call for a more cautious approach with a use of language that will provide more space and further guarantees towards strengthening collective security mechanisms.

It is time to call for moderation. In that regard, we welcome the French Government's initiative and the mediation efforts undertaken by other key actors. We call for the immediate cessation of hostilities and the restoration of the situation prevailing before the conflict. That is the path towards peace, and the Security Council must follow that path in compliance with its lofty responsibilities. We are here to strengthen the rule of international law, the guarantees of collective security and internationally recognized principles, including the protection of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, in this case of Georgia.

We reiterate our call for moderation, a cessation of hostilities and the establishment of contacts between the parties, as that is the road towards a political solution to the conflict, something to which we are all committed as we shoulder the lofty responsibilities we bear.

Mr. Kafando (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): First of all, my delegation would like to thank Mr. Lynn Pascoe and Mr. Edmond Mulet for the information they have kindly provided us on the situation in Georgia.

This is the third time that the Security Council has met in a very short period of time to try and find a diplomatic solution to this grave dispute, which shows that we are facing one of the most serious crises of recent years.

For that reason, quite frankly, Burkina Faso is very worried at the way events are going. We are particularly worried and concerned by the continuing escalation of the violence in South Ossetia, Georgia, and by the extension of the conflict to other regions of Georgia, particularly Abkhazia. We especially regret the ever increasing number of victims, particularly among the civilian population, and the continuing worsening of the humanitarian situation. Given the current state of the conflict and the likely developments, there is no doubt whatsoever that the situation has now become extremely dangerous for the entire region, and if we are not careful, it could get even worse. Now, under those conditions, it is essential that other States in the region demonstrate the greatest restraint in order to avoid the conflict taking on broader dimensions.

We urge the international community to call upon all the parties involved to cease hostilities immediately. At this stage, it is essential that they commit themselves to a ceasefire without delay, that they renounce the use of force and respect international humanitarian law and human rights, and that they agree to opening a humanitarian corridor to evacuate the wounded and refugees. We believe the best way to do that is to engage in negotiations on the basis of the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations.

We also call upon the parties to do everything possible not to jeopardize the presence, the mandate or the security of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia in Abkhazia. Burkina Faso supports all ongoing initiatives aimed at putting an end to the hostilities and bringing the parties to the negotiating table.

For my delegation, given the seriousness and the continued worsening of the situation, it is urgent and essential that the Security Council do everything it can to convince the parties to cease the fighting, to renounce the use of force and to resume dialogue at all costs. Of course, if all of this can be done through a consensus-based resolution of Security Council, then Burkina Faso will make its humble contribution.

Mr. Natalegawa (Indonesia): Over the past few days and on several occasions here in the Council, my delegation has expressed its profound concern over the escalating violence in South Ossetia, Georgia.

Today, that concern has been greatly magnified. We do not wish to repeat what is already widely known of the serious deterioration of conditions, as reported by the Secretariat. We thank Under-Secretary-General Lynn Pascoe and Assistant Secretary-General Edmond Mulet for their briefings, which were, as usual, important and informative.

However, we wish to underscore one fact that is giving rise to the deepest concern, namely, the humanitarian consequences. The lack of a collective Security Council voice on the conflict in South Ossetia, Georgia, must not extend to silence on such a humanitarian toll. Indonesia is deeply moved by the suffering being experienced by innocent civilians — women, children and the elderly — as fighting rages around them. We wish to impress upon all conflicting parties that they should carry out their obligations under international humanitarian law. That universally recognized body of law is designed precisely to protect civilians, in particular women and children, in times of armed conflict. Immediate practical steps are needed to protect those people.

We must not allow the logic of war to prevail — a vicious cycle of violence and more violence. Instead, we must assure the ascendancy of diplomacy and the power of reason and argument over the use of force. We recognize that the inherent dispute over South Ossetia, Georgia, may not be ripe for an instant solution. However, ultimately, dialogue is the only path towards a comprehensive and lasting solution. In the midst of the grave situation in Georgia, Indonesia finds some encouragement, however tenuous, in the diplomatic efforts being made to de-escalate tensions and bring the violence to an end. We strongly support those efforts.

We wish also to emphasize the importance of communication among Council members, especially among the principals, in order to forge common ground and consensus. Once again, my delegation would like to reiterate the importance of a simple and early collective message by the Council to all the parties, unburdened by any other consideration except humanitarian ones: end the violence now.

Mr. Arias (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, allow me to express my gratitude for the briefings that were given to us by Under-Secretary-General Pascoe and Assistant Secretary-General Mulet.

Panama has listened very closely and with great concern to the views expressed in this Chamber over the past few days by the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Georgia and by the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation and other members of the Council.

Regarding this matter, Panama would like to state that we are concerned by and condemn the decision taken by the Georgian Government to seek to impose its authority over South Ossetia through the use of force. Panama is also concerned by and condemns the entirely disproportionate, and therefore illegitimate, use of force by the Russian Federation with the stated aim of protecting its citizens and peacekeeping forces.

Panama recalls that the right of self-defence provided for in Article 51 of the Charter has some basic restrictions, and any abuse of these by the Russian Federation is a violation of its fiduciary obligations as a permanent member of the Council.

Panama issues a call for the Council to immediately express itself in favour of a cessation of hostilities and a return to the status quo ante. The Council should also support the diplomatic efforts undertaken by a number of countries and international organizations. Panama expresses its respect for the territorial integrity of the Republic of Georgia, and also wishes to recognize the right to self-determination of the people of South Ossetia. Panama is aware of the conflict between those two principles.

Mr. Ettalhi (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): Like those who took the floor earlier, I wish to thank Under-Secretary-General Pascoe and Assistant Secretary-General Mulet for their briefings.

My country wishes to state its deep concern at the escalation of violence and the very high number of civilian casualties, displaced persons and refugees, as well as the large-scale destruction in the capital of South Ossetia and in other areas.

Mistaken assessments or a certain short-sightedness can unfortunately lead to disasters of this nature. But when that occurs, the international community, and the Security Council in particular, must urgently shoulder their responsibilities.

We see very clearly that a serious humanitarian disaster has beset the region, and the Council must focus on putting an end to it. In spite of the suffering, the dire humanitarian situation and the deteriorating situation on the ground, the Council has shown itself to be incapable of agreeing on common language. My country would support any initiative whatsoever, any efforts whatsoever, aimed at reaching consensus within this Council. Here, we reiterate our call for an immediate ceasefire, for a return to the status quo ante and for respect for existing resolutions and agreements.

The President (*spoke in French*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Belgium.

I would like first of all to thank the Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Pascoe, and the Assistant Secretary-General, Mr. Mulet, for their briefings. I would like to reiterate at the outset my country's confidence in the impartiality of the Secretariat of this Organization.

Belgium expresses its very serious concern at the disturbing evolution of events on the ground, which have been marked by an escalation of military operations and a territorial extension of the conflict to areas beyond South Ossetia, in particular towards Abkhazia. Furthermore, the events of recent days have created a very serious humanitarian situation and have led to considerable damage. Above all, they have taken the lives of a large number of victims.

Belgium would like firmly to stress three elements. First, Belgium wishes to express its unconditional support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia within its internationally recognized borders. Secondly, Belgium calls for an immediate ceasefire without any preconditions and a return to the situation that existed on the ground prior to 6 August. Thirdly, Belgium emphatically recalls how important it is for all parties concerned to emerge from a military approach and adopt a peaceful approach. Only a political process can be the basis for lasting peace in the region. We therefore support the various diplomatic initiatives that are currently under way and that are aimed at helping the parties to find a solution.

Finally, Belgium expresses its grave concern with regard to the measures that led yesterday to the forced withdrawal of military observers of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia from the Kodori Valley and recalls its full support for that United Nations operation.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

The representative of Georgia has asked for the floor to make a further statement, and I call on him now.

Mr. Alasania (Georgia): First of all, let me express our gratitude towards the majority — the near-totality — of the members of the Security Council for their observations. I also want to express our appreciation to the Under-Secretary-General and the Assistant Secretary-General for their observations and their briefings.

For a moment, I thought that Mr. Churkin did not hear what the briefers were saying, but then I just found everything quite logical, because all that we were hearing here from the Russian Federation is reminiscent of the statements and propaganda by the Soviet Union when it invaded Afghanistan, Prague and Budapest. The statements were not only based on false information; they were cynical, outrageous and inhuman.

Since when can a neighbouring country use strategic bombers and 24-hour non-stop indiscriminate bombing of civilian targets be called a support of a peace operation? What are the grounds for Russia doing something like this?

My region is familiar with Russian-style peace enforcement. We have seen it twice in my neighbourhood. When the Republic of Chechnya in the north Caucasus was erased from the face of the Earth, we turned a blind eye. We cannot do that now because

that is exactly Russia's intention: to erase Georgian statehood and to exterminate the Georgian people. Unless we act together now, that is not going to be stopped. I urgently call for the Council to take action today, as was proposed by the majority of Security Council members.

The President (*spoke in French*): The representative of the Russian Federation has asked for the floor to make a further statement, and I call on him now.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would say that I have already responded in my statement to the overwhelming majority of comments and statements by colleagues; I do not think there is any need for me to go back to them. I would, however, like to respond to just one question that related to the intentions of the Russian Federation. I want to stress that our intentions are very simple: they are rooted in history. History shows that Russia has very close ties to the many peoples of the Caucasus — peoples whose relations with each other, for centuries, have, unfortunately, been very difficult and, often, not friendly. We now see this in the relations between Georgia and Abkhazia and between Georgia and Ossetia.

But looking at the whole interconnected history of this issue, I should like to make the observation that north of South Ossetia lies North Ossetia, which is a republic of the Russian Federation. That is something that must be borne in mind. We have a deep sense of responsibility vis-à-vis the peoples of the Caucasus, and that applies — in a very positive way — to the people of Georgia and to Georgia itself. Of course, it is very difficult at this stage to speak of normal feelings between Georgians and Russians, but such feelings existed for centuries; they were very friendly feelings. We are convinced that the time will come when those feelings and those relationships will return.

When referring to North Ossetia, however, I must also say that about a million Georgians live in the Russian Federation, many of them occupying leading roles in our country's cultural and public life; they are, of course, fully fledged citizens of the Russian Federation.

Hence, the intention of the Russian Federation in this case is to ensure that the people of South Ossetia and Abkhazia not fear for their lives or for their identity. We spoke today of the beginning of the conflict and of how it has developed since 7 August. But we must also look further back into history. We must look back to a time when, in 1991, Georgia tried to deny Abkhazia and South Ossetia not only their autonomy but also their identity, by declaring them to be Georgian. When the Abkhaz and South Ossetians protested against that, Georgia responded with a military operation, which of course failed. That certainly was a major tragedy for the peoples of Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Georgia, and it produced a large number of refugees. But the solution lies not in a new operation — not in a repetition of the tragic mistake of 1991 — as we can see now.

The solution lies in the settlement plan that was emerging, which called for the conclusion of an agreement on the non-use of force, the establishment of economic contacts and the rebuilding of the social infrastructure, followed by a move towards resolving the political relations between Georgia and South Ossetia.

I do not want to go into the details of this, but Mr. Alasania was quite wrong to mention Chechnya. Russia did not decide on Chechnya's autonomous status; we never declared that Chechens were Russians. There, fortunately, everything has been sorted out. We have a distinguished Chechen Republic within the Russian Federation, whose citizens are citizens both of the Russian Federation and of the Chechen Republic, and that republic is alive and well. We truly hope that the same situation will come about at some point with respect to the relations among Georgians, Abkhazians and South Ossetians.

The President (*spoke in French*): The representative of the United States has asked for the floor to make a further statement, and I call on him now.

Mr. Khalilzad (United States of America): I am taking the floor to respond to what Ambassador Churkin said in his earlier statement. We heard Ambassador Churkin's polemics, which did not respond to the call we have made for an immediate cessation of hostilities and a return to the status quo ante. He has acknowledged his Government's refusal to deal with the democratically elected President of Georgia. He has acknowledged that this situation is no longer about South Ossetia. He has attacked the United Nations Secretariat. He has made specious comparisons to other conflicts.

I want to focus, however, on one point that Ambassador Churkin made. Ambassador Churkin referred to his Minister's phone conversation with Secretary of State Rice this morning. That conversation raises serious questions about Russia's objectives in this conflict. In that conversation, Foreign Minister Lavrov told United States Secretary of State Rice that the democratically elected President of Georgia — and I quote — "must go". I quote again: "Saakashvili must go". This is completely unacceptable and crosses the line.

I want to ask Ambassador Churkin: is your Government's objective regime change in Georgia, the overthrow of the democratically elected Government of Georgia?

Russia must affirm that its aim is not to change the democratically elected Government of Georgia and that it accepts the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Georgia.

Russia is threatening the territorial integrity of Georgia, and this Council must act decisively to reaffirm the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Georgia.

The President (*spoke in French*): The representative of the Russian Federation has asked for the floor to make a further statement, and I call on him now.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Ambassador Khalilzad's statement was rather polemical, and I shall not respond: I think we have had enough polemics today. I will limit myself to a question of substance.

First of all, it is untrue to say that I did not respond to the appeal for a ceasefire. I explained, in realistic terms, the formula that could lead to putting an end to the bloodshed. I explained it very clearly: the Georgian military should withdraw from South Ossetia and agree to sign an agreement on the non-use of force in South Ossetia — and, we hope, also in Abkhazia. It should be said that Georgian representatives are always half-hinting that they agree — so why do they not do it? Why do they not make a proper statement on this matter and withdraw their forces from South Ossetia. We will not prevent that.

On Ambassador Khalilzad's interesting reference to a confidential diplomatic telephone call between our Minister for Foreign Affairs and his Secretary of State, I must say at the outset that regime change is an American expression. We do not use such expressions. But, as we know from history, sometimes there are occasions when certain leaders are elected by their peoples and come to power, either democratically or semi-democratically, and become an obstacle to enabling their own people from emerging from a given situation. In such situations, some leaders take courageous decisions with regard to their political future. Sometimes, certain matters are discussed, inter alia by diplomats. But I am encouraged by the fact that Ambassador Khalilzad has referred to this publicly; I suggest that this means that he finds it an interesting idea and that he is ready to place it before the international community for its verdict.

The President (*spoke in French*): I call on the representative of the United States.

Mr. Khalilzad (United States of America): I am sorry that I have to take the floor again, but I want to restate my question to Ambassador Churkin. He did not respond to that question. Is the goal of the Russian Federation to change the leadership of Georgia?

The President: The representative of Georgia has asked for the floor, and I call on him.

Mr. Alasania (Georgia): I would like to make a brief comment. As I heard Ambassador Churkin talking, the question asked and the answer that was received, for me, confirm that what the Russian Federation is seeking through this military aggression and invasion is to change the democratically elected Georgian Government. But I really want to seek more clarification, as was just requested by our colleague from the United States, from the representative of the Russian Federation.

The President: I call on the representative of the Russian Federation.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I believe that I gave a complete response. Perhaps the ambassador was not listening when I gave my response. Perhaps he did not have his earpiece on. I believe, again, that I gave a full response to his question.

The President (*spoke in French*): There are no further speakers on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.5954

Security Council

Distr.: General
11 August 2008

Original: English

Official communiqué of the 5954th (closed) meeting of the Security Council

Held in private at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 11 August 2008, at 5.30 p.m.

In accordance with rule 55 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, the following communiqué was issued through the Secretary-General in place of a verbatim record:

"At its 5954th meeting, held in private on 11 August 2008, the Security Council considered the item entitled 'The situation in Georgia'.

"The President, with the consent of the Council, invited the representatives of Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belarus, Bulgaria, Canada, Cuba, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, India, Ireland, Israel, Georgia, Greece, Japan, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Morocco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and Ukraine to participate in the consideration of the item without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

"The Security Council heard briefings under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure by Mr. B. Lynn Pascoe, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs and Mr. Edmond Mulet, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations.

"Members of the Council, the representative of Georgia, Mr. Pascoe and Mr. Mulet had an exchange of views."

08-45719 (E) 110808

United Nations S/PV.5955

Security Council

Sixty-third year

Provisional

5955th meeting

Monday, 18 August 2008, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Grauls	(Belgium)
Members:	Burkina Faso	Mr. Tiendrébéogo
	China	Mr. Du Xiacong
	Costa Rica	Mr. Urbina
	Croatia	Mr. Skračić
	France	Mr. Lacroix
	Indonesia	Mr. Natalegawa
	Italy	Mr. Azzarello
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Ettalhi
	Panama	Mr. Suescum
	Russian Federation	Mr. Paletskiy
	South Africa	Ms. Qwabe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir John Sawers
	United States of America	Mr. DeLaurentis
	Viet Nam	Mr. Hoang Chi Trung

Agenda

Non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction

Letter dated 8 July 2008 from the Chairman of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2008/493)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

08-46307 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction

Letter dated 8 July 2008 from the Chairman of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2008/493)

The President (*spoke in French*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2008/493, containing a letter dated 8 July 2008 from the Chairman of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) addressed to the President of the Security Council.

At this meeting, the Council will hear a briefing by His Excellency Mr. Jorge Urbina, Chairman of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004). I now give the floor to Mr. Urbina.

Mr. Urbina (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): Pursuant to paragraph 7 of resolution 1810 (2008), and on behalf of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), it is my pleasure to submit to the Security Council the Committee's report on the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004).

Since the adoption of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) in April 2004, the Committee established pursuant to that resolution has made considerable progress in promoting full implementation of the resolution through its intensive work programmes. That work includes assisting the Security Council in monitoring the implementation of the resolution through the examination of relevant measures taken by all States Members of the United Nations, the organization of intensive outreach activities, the development of deeper and mutually beneficial cooperation with other Security Council counter-terrorism bodies as well as with global, regional, and subregional intergovernmental organizations, the creation of new tools to facilitate assistance and transparency, and the enhancement of its dialogue with individual States.

In the present report the Committee expresses the belief that those activities substantially raised the awareness of the international community concerning the dangers associated with the potential nexus between the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, their means of delivery and related materials, and non-State actors. Since the adoption by the Security Council of resolution 1673 (2006), the Committee's work has placed greater emphasis on implementation of resolution 1540 (2004), facilitating the efforts of Member States to prepare to address that nexus.

(*spoke in English*)

In its present report, the 1540 Committee identifies a number of specific measures that States have in place to implement resolution 1540 (2004), including steps they have taken since April 2006. They range from developing new institutional means to incorporate the obligations of resolution 1540 (2004) in national practices to adopting new legislation and enforcement measures, executing new policies and creating new assistance programmes directed towards implementation of the resolution.

The new reports submitted by a number of States since 2006 and the additional information received from other States, or otherwise identified from official governmental sources, have enabled the Committee to present a more complete picture of the measures already in place or planned in the near future. Thus, it has been possible to demonstrate a qualitative improvement in progress towards achieving full implementation of the resolution.

(*spoke in French*)

Notwithstanding that progress, the Committee concludes that Member States need to do far more than they have already done to implement resolution 1540 (2004). Consequently, achieving the goals of the resolution requires further attention by the Security Council and more intensive action, particularly on capacity-building and sharing lessons learned.

Among other recommendations, the Committee believes that, consistent with Security Council resolution 1810 (2008), it should strengthen its clearing-house role for channelling assistance to States

in need; increase tailored dialogue with and among States to identify assistance needs and assistance projects to meet them; and promote awareness of, make better use of and consider options for developing existing financial mechanisms in order to build capacity to implement resolution 1540 (2004). To those ends, it should also work more closely with global and regional intergovernmental organizations and arrangements, within and outside the United Nations system, in fostering the sharing of experience, creating forums for discussion and developing innovative mechanisms to achieve implementation of the resolution.

Full implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) by all States will take time. Once it has been accomplished, vigilance and innovation will be needed to maintain effective policies. That task not only calls for a long-term commitment to the objectives of the resolution, but also the nurturing of a sense of urgency, given the gravity of the threat facing the international community.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the Council, I wish to thank the Chairman of the 1540 Committee, Ambassador Urbina, and his predecessor, Mr. Burian, as well as the group of experts for their work. The final report submitted to the Council today bears witness to the progress that has been achieved thanks to their endeavours. It also demonstrates the scale of the task that remains to be performed.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list; the Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 10.20 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.5956

Security Council

Sixty-third year

Provisional

5956th meeting

Monday, 18 August 2008, 10.20 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Grauls	(Belgium)
Members:	Burkina Faso	Mr. Tiendrébéogo
	China	Mr. Du Xiacong
	Costa Rica	Mr. Urbina
	Croatia	Mr. Skračić
	France	Mr. Renié
	Indonesia	Mr. Natalegawa
	Italy	Mr. Mantovani
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Ettalhi
	Panama	Mr. Suescum
	Russian Federation	Mr. Dolgov
	South Africa	Ms. Qwabe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Quarrey
	United States of America	Ms. DiCarlo
	Viet Nam	Mr. Hoang Chi Trung

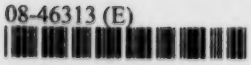
Agenda

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan

Report of the Secretary-General on the Sudan (S/2008/485)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

08-46313 (E)



The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan (S/2008/485)

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation, under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure, to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Sudan and head of the United Nations Mission in the Sudan, Mr. Ashraf Jehangir Qazi.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Qazi to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance reached in its prior consultations. Members of the Council have before them the report of the Secretary-General on the Sudan (S/2008/485).

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Sudan and head of the United Nations Mission in the Sudan, Mr. Ashraf Jehangir Qazi. I now give the floor to Mr. Qazi.

Mr. Qazi: I have the pleasure to introduce the Secretary-General's latest report on the Sudan (S/2008/485). I am grateful for the opportunity to brief the Council on the situation on the ground in the Sudan.

Implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), though behind schedule, remains on track. The level of mutual cooperation between the two CPA partners has shown some signs of improvement. Nevertheless the foundation for a durable peace remains fragile.

The security situation during the reporting period remained precarious. The two parties were involved in the most severe violations of the ceasefire since the Malakal clashes in November 2005. In Abyei, fighting between the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) from 14 to 20 May resulted in 89 fatalities, 18 of which were reported to be civilians. Around 50,000 people were displaced and most of the town of Abyei was destroyed. All United Nations civilian staff and humanitarian workers had to be evacuated from the area.

On 10 May, the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) launched an attack on Omdurman in an effort to reach Khartoum. The JEM forces traversed 1200 kilometres from Darfur to reach Omdurman. They used 300 pickup trucks. Government forces repulsed the attack. According to figures released by the Government, 79 members of the Government's security forces, 57 civilians and 329 JEM fighters lost their lives during the fighting.

SPLA forces also clashed with local tribesman in Southern Kordofan State. Inter-communal fighting in the Southern Sudan continued and was further compounded by the coercive civilian disarmament campaign by SPLA in some areas. This period also saw a rise in the alleged activities of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in Western Equatoria State. On 5 June, the LRA attacked an SPLA garrison in Nabanga, killing 14 SPLA soldiers and 12 civilians.

The peace process has crossed a halfway mark and a number of critical benchmarks are either fast approaching or have past. While the working relationship between the two partners is relatively cordial, the lack of mutual trust and confidence remains a significant obstacle to the goals of making unity attractive and the peaceful implementation of the CPA.

Building on some recent positive developments will accordingly be an urgent priority for the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS). At all times, however, the prime responsibility for the adoption of peaceful and non-zero-sum approaches towards meeting critical benchmarks and resolving differences over outstanding issues will remain that of the two CPA partners. The international community will also be called upon to offer a range of assistance to enable both sides to meet their obligations.

The figures for redeployment remain largely unchanged; 97 per cent of SAF troops verified by UNMIS and accepted by the Ceasefire Joint Monitoring Commission (CJMC) have redeployed north of the current border line. SPLA verified and accepted redeployment stands at 10 per cent of the initial stated figures of 59,168 troops. The low

percentage of SPLA forces redeployed from Southern Kordofan State and its renewed presence in Blue Nile State remains a source of tension between the two parties.

The enumeration process in the national census has been completed and the results are expected in early 2009; however, this agreement over the final results, if any, would impact on critical CPA processes, such as the elections and welcome power sharing. The electoral law has been passed and the parties are now engaged in finalizing nominations for the National Election Commission (NEC). These nominees are expected to be confirmed by parliament by the end of this month. The parties are aware of our offer of assistance and may be requesting it in the coming weeks. If things proceed accordingly, elections can still take place by the end of 2009.

Significant progress has been made regarding disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) benchmarks, the National Council for DDR Coordination has endorsed the national reintegration policy and on 25 June of this year, agreement was reached on the content and modalities of the multi-year, reintegration component of the DDR programme, which will require donor contributions of $430 million over 4 years.

On 20 July, the parties agreed on the respective roles of the Northern and Southern Sudan DDR Commissions in the three transitional areas. This will pave the way for implementation of DDR in these areas. I encourage the parties to make further progress on joint operational plans and funding for reintegration programmes. The next senior level roundtable meeting in the Sudan between the Government, donors and the United Nations is expected to take place in October, at which time the status of the programme will be revealed. Donor pledges will be made and the next steps may be discussed, including a starting date of the programme.

The United Nations continues to exert a significant effort on the humanitarian and development front. This reporting period continued to see returns of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees to the south. It is estimated that 153,638 returned in 2008, of which 58 per cent were organized returns. The clear challenge with respect to returning populations is to ensure that over and above the basic services provided as immediate humanitarian aid, development assistance is available in the communities where they are returning, including health, water and sanitation, education and regaining lost skills for agricultural livelihoods.

In this context, I am pleased to announce that the Southern Sudan Recovery Fund was successfully launched at the Sudan Consortium in Oslo earlier in May this year. This will enable transition funding to the States of Southern Sudan and rapid implementation and capacity-building of provincial and State-level institutions. The third Sudan Donor Consortium was attended by 250 delegates from 48 countries and organizations. Vice-President Taha presided over the event and the Norwegian Government graciously hosted. The Consortium agreed on the recovery and development priority for the second half of the CPA period 2008 to 2011.

The review of progress of the Joint Assessment Mission (JAM) suggested that targets had been largely met. These included a stable macroeconomic environment, containment of inflation, progress towards creating a conducive environment for foreign direct investment and increasing pro-poor expenditure. However, external debt remains very high and the economy remains heavily dependent on oil. There was general consensus with regard to a common way forward. The donors welcomed the adoption of the Government of National Unity's five-year plan, the Government of the Southern Sudan's medium-term expenditure priorities, as well as the proposed joint projects, and pledged $4.8 billion in support of the Sudan over the planning period 2008 to 2011.

Humanitarian needs continue to be addressed as part of UNMIS mandate. Of significance were the 50,000 displacements from Abyei and an additional 25,000 affected people, who moved to Aguok and outlying areas, while close to 5,000 moved to Muglad, north of Abyei.

The rapid deployment of United Nations humanitarian agencies resulted in the immediate provision of humanitarian assistance. With elements of the Abyei road map in place, it is envisaged that people will start returning there. However, a major concern of the displaced people is to avoid disrupting the education of their children. It may be likely that the bulk of the returns will take place in December, at the end of the current school semester, but it could be

earlier. The United Nations family is prepared to assist with immediate and long-term recovery needs.

The demarcation of the 1956 border line — the border between the North and the South — is the most crucial outstanding issue. The Technical Ad Hoc Border Committee has yet to complete its report, which will then be submitted to the presidency. The next stage will consist of developing a satellite-imagery-based map and of conducting the demarcation process on the ground. The United Nations has supported the Committee with technical expertise and is now in the process of providing further technical assistance for the satellite imagery for the development of the border map. Progress on the delineation and demarcation of the 1956 border is critical for the peaceful implementation of the CPA. I urge the parties to ensure the expedited submission of the report to the presidency so that the delineation and demarcation process can move forward. We are ready, if requested by both sides, to assist them in the resolution of outstanding issues with regard to this matter.

With regard to the role of UNMIS vis-à-vis the recent Abyei crisis, it needs to be appreciated where the primary responsibility for the violence, escalation, looting, arson, death and displacement lie. The two sides and their respective armies bear primary, and indeed exclusive, responsibility for what happened in Abyei. As signatories to the CPA, they continue to be responsible for ensuring that the tragedy of May 2008 is never repeated, whether in Abyei or elsewhere.

Because of the extreme political sensitivity of the events in Abyei, there has been a tendency to blame UNMIS for the consequences of decisions taken elsewhere. That is not to suggest that UNMIS regards itself beyond criticism — far from it. Complacency and the refusal to draw lessons from the experience of such crises would contradict the basic obligation of the Mission to constantly seek ways and means to improve its own performance.

In the aftermath of the fighting, UNMIS carried out a comprehensive and detailed after-action review of its response, which was submitted to Headquarters. It identified the strengths, the weaknesses and the lessons learned from our experience. UNMIS sheltered and escorted to safety over 100 civilians during the fighting. All United Nations and humanitarian staff were evacuated without a single injury. Emergency security meetings were convened at which the parties pledged to take a number of actions to calm the situation and maintain the ceasefire, but implemented none of them. Meetings of the area joint military committees and the Ceasefire Joint Monitoring Commission were convened on the ground. Ministers were flown to Abyei to end the fighting, but to no avail. The fact of the matter is that there was a breakdown of local command and control. The instructions of high officials were simply ignored by local commanders. However, the review also acknowledges our failure to protect United Nations agency compounds in the town. In the aftermath of the conflict, the United Nations provided, and continues to provide, humanitarian assistance to those displaced from the area.

The tragic exodus of most of the population of Abyei before the main escalation of the fighting was, in a way, fortunate; it averted the possibility of a real bloodbath among the residents of Abyei. According to estimates so far, there were 89 fatalities, including 18 civilians. That is still far too many, but given the scale of hostilities between both sides and their inability or unwillingness to implement measures already agreed upon, there was little UNMIS could do to prevent the loss of life.

With regard to the protection of civilian property, the fact is that most of the arson was committed during the fighting and most of the looting after the cessation of hostilities on 20 May — although it also occurred during lulls in the fighting. The impression that UNMIS did nothing while Abyei burned and was looted is not correct. When two regular armies fight each other with tanks, multi-battery rocket launchers, artillery and heavy machine guns, irrespective of the specific numbers of peacekeepers assigned to Abyei, there is no way they can actively intervene to suppress the fighting. Moreover, UNMIS has no such mandate, nor do its rules of engagement allow the use of lethal force to protect civilian property.

Nevertheless, the Abyei events do indicate the need for urgent discussions on the critical issue of incorporating Chapter VII provisions in a Chapter VI mandate and the expectations it generates vis-à-vis the capabilities given to the Mission. In that regard, I commend the report entitled "Security Council action under Chapter VII: myths and realities", which was released on 23 June 2008 and which highlights the dilemma that is faced by peacekeepers all over the world. The question of mandate and capabilities are

inevitably interlinked. You cannot have a robust interpretation of a given mandate for which a robust intervention capability is not provided. Moreover, the degree of robustness to which a mission mandate can be interpreted is a function of the political and military space allowed to the missions by the parties.

Being a Chapter VI mission, UNMIS neither possesses the robust intervention capability nor was it provided the requisite political and military space by the parties, including the freedom of movement for monitoring and verification. That has been repeatedly conveyed to the Council by the Secretary-General and his Special Representatives over the past three years. The issue of responsibility to protect civilians under imminent danger precludes law enforcement activities such as the protection of civilian property. Nevertheless, it does create expectations of an international commitment to providing a broad range of protection and enforcement measures. I urge the Council to initiate a debate on such issues so that clear guidelines on the subject can emerge that can be translated into realistic rules of engagement for peacekeepers equipped with the requisite capability.

Those discussions, however, should not distract us from the fact that there has been significant progress in Abyei. In line with the four-point agreement signed by the parties, the redeployment of SAF and SPLA forces out of the area is almost complete. We are encouraging both parties to redeploy the remaining elements as a matter of priority. The training of the Joint Integrated Units and the Joint Integrated Police Units is under way. The Units will deploy in the area soon. Very importantly, the parties have finally agreed on an interim administration for Abyei, which should be able to provide basic services to the returning civilian population. An assistance plan is in place and will be submitted to the interim administration for approval. The donor community is expected to be generous in contributing to the Abyei reconstruction fund.

It is not possible to discuss the current situation in the Sudan outside the context of the recent action taken by the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the reaction of the Sudanese Government to that development. I have conveyed to the Government of the Sudan that the ICC is an independent institution and that UNMIS will continue to implement its mandate in the Sudan. The Government has qualified the ICC action as political and not legal, but it has acknowledged the distinction between the ICC and the mandate of the two peacekeeping missions in the Sudan. However, the Government has conveyed to me that the issuance of an arrest warrant against President Al-Bashir could create a situation that might have serious consequences for United Nations staff and infrastructure in the Sudan. We are taking all the necessary precautionary measures, including strengthening our cooperation with the Sudanese security institutions. We are also engaged in contingency planning for a range of possible scenarios, in close consultation with the United Nations Department of Safety and Security.

Meanwhile, engagement with all parties relevant to the implementation of the CPA will remain essential for the success of our mandated mission in the Sudan. The predominant fact remains that peace in the Sudan is indivisible. Should the CPA unravel, the prospects for a peaceful outcome in Darfur will largely disappear. The successful implementation of the CPA brightens the prospects for peace in Darfur. I say that because the perception that an over-focus on Darfur has diverted attention from the need to provide a peace dividend through the implementation of the CPA is real, especially among southern Sudanese. We have to change that perception through emphatic and tangible recognition of the centrality of the CPA.

In the light of the foregoing, three years down the road the prospects for the CPA are uncertain but not necessarily bleak. There has been progress in Abyei. The census enumeration has been completed. The electoral process is under way. There is at last progress on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. Recovery and development projects have begun to make some difference on the ground. However, ultimate success will require the parties to realize that peace can be consolidated only through the full implementation of the Abyei road map and the successful demarcation of the 1956 border. For longer-term peaceful coexistence and prosperity, it will also be imperative, irrespective of the outcome of the referendum, for the two sides to prepare the ground for longer-term economic cooperation.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Qazi for his briefing.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I should now like to invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion of the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.40 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.5957

Security Council

Sixty-third year

Provisional

5957th meeting

Tuesday, 19 August 2008, 11 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Grauls	(Belgium)
Members:	Burkina Faso	Mr. Kafando
	China	Mr. Li Kexin
	Costa Rica	Mr. Urbina
	Croatia	Mr. Skračić
	France	Mr. Renié
	Indonesia	Mr. Natalegawa
	Italy	Mr. Mantovani
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Ettalhi
	Panama	Mr. Arias
	Russian Federation	Mr. Dolgov
	South Africa	Mr. Kumalo
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Bayley
	United States of America	Ms. DiCarlo
	Viet Nam	Mr. Le Luong Minh

Agenda

The situation in Somalia

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Somalia (S/2008/466)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

08-46495 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 11.05 a.m.

Tribute to the memory of United Nations personnel

The President (*spoke in French*): Before we begin our work, I should like to make the following statement.

Today marks the fifth anniversary of the attack in Baghdad against the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq. The Mission was then headed by the late Sergio Vieira de Mello, who had previously played a vital role in the transition of Timor-Leste, which is among the agenda items to be considered by the Council this morning. A minute of silence and a commemorative ceremony in the presence of the Secretary-General have preceded our work. In that emotion-filled context, I should like to open our deliberations by once again paying tribute to all United Nations staff members who have died or have been wounded in the service of the Organization throughout the world.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Somalia

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Somalia (S/2008/466)

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Somalia, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Mohamed (Somalia) took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in French*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2008/556, which contains the text of a draft resolution prepared in the course of the Council's prior consultations. Members also have before them document S/2008/466, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Somalia.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. Unless I hear any objection, I shall now put the draft resolution to the vote.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Belgium, Burkina Faso, China, Costa Rica, Croatia, France, Indonesia, Italy, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Panama, Russian Federation, South Africa, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Viet Nam

The President (*spoke in French*): There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1831 (2008).

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council will remain seized of the matter.

The meeting rose at 11.10 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.5958

Security Council

Sixty-third year

Provisional

5958th meeting

Tuesday, 19 August 2008, 11.10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Grauls	(Belgium)
Members:	Burkina Faso	Mr. Kafando
	China	Mr. Li Kexin
	Costa Rica	Mr. Urbina
	Croatia	Mr. Skračić
	France	Mr. Renié
	Indonesia	Mr. Natalegawa
	Italy	Mr. Mantovani
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Ettalhi
	Panama	Mr. Arias
	Russian Federation	Mr. Dolgov
	South Africa	Mr. Kumalo
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Bayley
	United States of America	Ms. DiCarlo
	Viet Nam	Mr. Le Luong Minh

Agenda

The situation in Timor-Leste

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (S/2008/501)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

08-46511 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 11.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Timor-Leste

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (S/2008/501)

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Australia, Brazil, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Portugal and Timor-Leste in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Da Costa (Timor-Leste) took a seat at the Council table; the representatives of the other aforementioned countries took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Atul Khare, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Timor-Leste and head of Mission of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT).

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Khare to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members have before them document S/2008/501, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on UNMIT.

At this meeting, the Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Atul Khare, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Timor-Leste and head of Mission of UNMIT. I now give him the floor.

Mr. Khare: I would like to begin by paying a special tribute to Sergio Vieira de Mello. His efforts in partnership with the people of Timor-Leste are an inspiring example for all who have subsequently served in Timor-Leste. On 10 May 2002, in his last major speech in Timor-Leste, referring to the Popular Consultation of 1999, Mr. Vieira de Mello said that Timor-Leste

> "paid a heavy price for that courageous gesture, but her people have responded with resilience and enthusiasm. [They] have been a brilliant example to a world that too often is weighed with the cynicism born of an excess of war, suffering, and violence".

I repeat those words today because they ring as true today as they did six years ago.

It is a pleasure for me to introduce to the Council the fourth report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT), covering the period from 8 January to 8 July 2008 (S/2008/501).

I would like to acknowledge the presence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Timor-Leste, His Excellency Mr. Zacarias Albano da Costa, and to avail myself of this opportunity to formally congratulate the Timorese authorities on their successful efforts to maintain stability and security and, indeed, normalcy in the functioning of state institutions, after the shocking attacks on President José Ramos-Horta and Prime Minister Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão on 11 February. Those efforts have justified increasing public confidence in the State institutions that serve as the guarantors of national unity.

The Government continues to make strides in addressing some of the priority challenges which emanated from the 2006 crisis. On 14 July, petitioners started receiving their payments and returning to their homes. As of 1 August, all petitioners have left the Aitarak Laran camp in Dili, and there have been no major incidents reported so far related to their return. No petitioners opted to apply for re-recruitment into the national army, or Falintil-Forças de Defesa de Timor-Leste (F-FDTL).

Progress also continues in the movement of internally displaced persons from the camps. As of today, 5,400 families in the camps have received the recovery packages under the Government's National Recovery Strategy, and 20 camps have been closed. Although that is encouraging, the actual implementation of all elements of the National Recovery Strategy is needed sooner rather than later if the physical movement of internally displaced persons is not to be undermined in the long term.

Some progress has been made in the conduct of the Timorese-led comprehensive review of the security sector. Timor-Leste authorities have preliminarily identified the need to address management and leadership gaps in the civil service, police and army as key priorities. I also agree with their observation that national stakeholders, including the opposition, should be allowed to proceed at their own reasonable pace rather than sacrificing true national ownership at the altar of speedy progress.

In response to the events of 11 February, the Government chose a military-police security model in which a Joint Command temporarily took on internal security responsibilities, particularly in specific areas of the country where the fugitives were. That was successful in contributing to their surrender, but there have been some concerns about abuses by those forces, particularly the military. The Government has been responsive when those concerns were raised; however, it is not clear how effectively Government concerns are being institutionalized and articulated further down the ranks. Furthermore, bilateral assistance from partners is essential if the professionalization of the F-FDTL; the definition of a meaningful role for the army in a peacetime setting that does not encroach upon the primary responsibility of the civilian administration or the police; strengthened internal accountability, and strong civilian oversight are to be achieved.

The Government has expressed its desire that the resumption of policing responsibilities by the National Police Force of Timor-Leste (PNTL) be completed early next year. That desire needs to be accompanied by concomitant efforts to ensure that logistics are in place, necessary efforts are undertaken to facilitate the work of the Evaluation Panel and there is commitment to the criteria for resumption of responsibilities. Therefore, in consultation with the Prime Minister, I have decided to delay the commencement of the process of resumption of responsibility for a few more months to provide adequate space to the Government to address the pressing logistical needs. I strongly believe that a flexible timeline for this process, coupled with a comparatively inflexible application of mutually determined criteria, will ensure long-term success.

Public confidence in the PNTL is essential for its long-term success. As it takes on greater responsibilities, newer cases of corruption and abuse of authority by the PNTL need to be strongly pursued. I have been distressed by reports that several senior PNTL officers might be involved in alleged misappropriation of funds provided for the activities of the Joint Command. In this respect, I welcome the decision of the Prime Minister on 18 August to temporarily suspend eight PNTL officers and to allow criminal investigations by the Prosecutor-General to proceed where deemed appropriate.

Long-term strategies to ensure that a culture of impunity is not established depend on an effective judiciary, which in turn is part of the larger rule of law system that guarantees stability. When parts of that larger system, including the judiciary, are still weak, the challenge before us is great. Establishment of the rule of law is a wide-ranging effort; the integrated mission model has proven itself to be a successful approach for such a complex undertaking, and UNMIT continues its efforts to support State institutions. I am delighted to report that the third training course for 18 additional judicial officers — judges, public prosecutors and public defenders — commenced on 29 July.

The serious crimes investigation team of UNMIT has been proceeding with its mandated task of completion of all pending investigations. As of today, 20 investigations have been concluded, another 11 are in progress, and the 118 cases that were disallowed from entering the Timor-Leste community reconciliation agreement by the Reception, Truth and Reconciliation Commission are being thoroughly reviewed.

Effective protection of the human rights of women and children is another important feature of a democratic society. This month, the Government, with the support of UNICEF, will initiate a programme led by the Ministry of Justice to nationally disseminate recommendations made by the Committee on the Rights of the Child following Timor-Leste's first report to that Committee. Rede Feto, a network of women's

non-governmental organizations, has completed its district level consultations in preparation for the third National Timorese Women's Congress, to be held from 10 to 12 September.

The signature of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework for the period 2009-2013 by Prime Minister Gusmão on 8 August, in the presence of a large number of ministers, testifies both to the partnership between the United Nations and Timor-Leste and to real and effective integration in my integrated mission. I must also particularly commend the efforts of the United Nations country team, including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Food Programme, in promoting effective responses to the food crisis, and of UNICEF in organizing the visit of its goodwill ambassador, Jackie Chan, which contributed to the dissemination of the message of mutual respect, unity and peace to the martial arts groups of the country.

Finally, permit me to express the debt of gratitude that I owe to the Deputy Special Representative, Finn Reske-Nielsen, and to all the women and men of UNMIT and of the United Nations country team, who have demonstrated dedication and commitment far beyond the peacekeeper's high call of duty. I am also deeply touched by the extremely gracious manner in which the leaders and the people of Timor-Leste have continued to receive me and all the United Nations staff working in Timor-Leste.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Khare for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Timor-Leste, His Excellency Mr. Zacarias Albano da Costa.

Mr. Da Costa (Timor-Leste): First of all, allow me to begin by congratulating you, Ambassador Grauls, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council and to express my gratitude to you for convening this meeting. It is an honour to be addressing this eminent audience once again.

As the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Atul Khare, has already mentioned, today is a poignant day for Timor-Leste, the United Nations and, of course, the Security Council. On this day, we remember and pay tribute to the life and contribution of former United Nations Transitional Administrator of East Timor and Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and a great friend of Timor-Leste, Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello, as well as of the United Nations employees who lost their lives in Baghdad on this very date five years ago.

Since my last intervention before this Council, a number of obstacles and difficulties — some grave and others of a different scale and nature — have arisen in Timor-Leste, but I speak to the Council today knowing that I have the resolute backing of the Timorese people when I say that we are wholeheartedly committed to the continued development of our young country as a democratic, peaceful and successful nation.

Council members have all received the report of the Secretary-General (S/2008/501). I now wish to discuss in more detail the way in which the Government plans to address the challenges that the report identifies.

The assassination attempts made on our President, His Excellency Mr. José Ramos-Horta, and on Prime Minister Mr. Xanana Gusmão presented a serious challenge to the institutions of State. However, the State responded positively by appointing an interim President to serve until President Ramos-Horta was able to resume the full responsibilities of office, which occurred on 17 April. Following the attacks, the Government and State institutions enacted two measures to maintain stability and public security and to allow for investigations to be undertaken. One mechanism was the establishment of a Joint Command led by the National Police Force of Timor-Leste (PNTL) and by the Falintil-Forças de Defesa de Timor-Leste (F-FDTL) for the conduct of security operations during a state of siege. The state of siege was a flexible and responsive mechanism that allowed for the easing of restrictions, such as curfew hours, during the period from 11 February to 22 May. As the Secretary General notes in his report, "encouragingly, and in contrast to the events of 2006, the situation did not precipitate a crisis destabilizing the entire society" (*S/2008/501, para. 4*).

The efforts of the Joint Command, together with those of a range of political mediation initiatives, resulted in the eventual surrender of the President's attackers and their associates. It is important to note two things. First, this operation was carried out without notable violence. Secondly, it demonstrated a remarkable level of institutional cooperation between the political authorities, the defence force and the

police services, which illustrated the progress in the rebuilding of the latter two institutions and their interrelationship.

The Government is aware of the 44 cases of alleged violations committed in areas of Joint Command operations opened by the Provedor for Human Rights and Justice and is committed to determining responsibility and implementing corrective and disciplinary measures to avoid a repetition of such incidents in the future. As the Secretary-General also notes in his report, the Government is indeed committed to addressing these shortcomings.

The Secretaries of State for Defence and Security will be specifying disciplinary actions for those found guilty of violations. The Joint Command, while not without its critics, was viewed positively by the majority of the Timorese population. It was established under exceptional circumstances, resulted in overall success and has now been discontinued.

Allow me to now draw the Council's attention to our humanitarian situation. The process of recovery will necessarily be a complex and delicate one. In December 2007, the Government presented its National Recovery Strategy, entitled "Hamutuk Hari'i Futuru", or "Building the Future Together". The Strategy offers a framework by which the Government, communities, civil society and the international community can harmonize their efforts to address the many and varied impacts of the 2006 crisis on Timorese society. The Strategy is a comprehensive Governmental approach led by the Vice Prime Minister and operating through a process of interministerial cooperation between the Ministries of Social Solidarity, Infrastructure, Justice, Economy and Development, and Defence and Security.

Under the National Recovery Strategy, more than 14,450 internally displaced families have expressed their desire for return or resettlement. I can report to the Council that, with the assistance of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT), United Nations agencies and other international partners, the Government has facilitated the return of large numbers of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the past few months. Camps and shelters that have existed for two years are now empty. A total of 20 IDP camps have now been closed and more than 3,650 internally displaced families have received recovery packages. That is evidence of the restoration of public faith in the improvement of the security situation and a more stable political environment.

The implementation of the National Recovery Strategy faces a number of challenges. The Government recognizes that it is critical that the remaining elements of the land and property laws be enacted and that priority be given to the allocation of transitional shelter and social housing for people who are unable to return to their homes. The Government is also alert of the need to address issues of food security among returning IDPs and Timorese society as a whole. It is also essential to manage conflict between returning IDPs and receiving communities. Broader community vulnerabilities need to be addressed, as does the rehabilitation of community infrastructure. The Government is committed to working with United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and civil society to ensure that IDP returns are durable and that recovery is meaningful for all Timorese people.

The Government also concluded a dialogue process with the Falintil-Forças de Defesa de Timor-Leste (F-FDTL) "petitioners". It issued an invitation to the petitioners to gather for a dialogue in Aitarak Laran in early February. By the end of May, 709 petitioners had accepted the invitation to enter into dialogue. All of the petitioners have now accepted the financial compensation package offered by the Government to return to civilian life and Aitarak Laran is now completely empty.

The Government of Timor-Leste is committed to the notion that rebuilding the national police is a long-term undertaking, requiring national ownership and continued international assistance for the foreseeable future. As the Secretary-General's report notes, "Considerable progress has been made in the registration, screening and certification programme for the national police". (*S/2008/501, para. 20*)

We continue to appreciate the efforts of UNMIT police not only in helping to guarantee public security, but also in supporting efforts towards the reconstitution of the national police. As indicated by the Prime Minister in his report on the state of siege and state of exception of 29 May, and in line with the language of the Secretary-General's report, we envisage that the resumption of policing responsibilities by the National Police Force of Timor-Leste (PNTL) should be complete within the first half of 2009. We are also happy to note that the Secretary-General does not

propose any reduction in the strength of UNMIT police during the current mandate, as its continued presence at current levels is essential to the smooth implementation of PNTL's resumption of responsibilities and its maintenance of stability.

We hope that any discussion of a United Nations police drawdown will be de-linked from the PNTL resumption of responsibilities and that a robust United Nations police presence will be maintained through and beyond the current UNMIT mandate. The Government of Timor-Leste realizes that the full reconstitution of PNTL will require our close engagement, and we will make every effort to ensure that the conditions are met to allow the joint implementation of a transitional process, which we are developing together with UNMIT and UNMIT police. That includes ensuring that the necessary logistics are in place, actions are taken to meet certification targets and satisfactory institutional readiness can be verified to ensure that the PNTL can assume routine policing activities. We want the PNTL to uphold the highest possible standards of professionalism, and therefore regard the certification process as an important step towards identifying those PNTL who have serious disciplinary and/or criminal issues that preclude them from police service.

As part of efforts to enhance democratic governance, the Government has made 2008 the Year of Administrative Reform. Under the guardianship of the Prime Minister, a Year of Administrative Reform conference was held in May 2008. The Government regards that as an important step forward in the transparency, accountability and integrity of the democratic governance processes in Timor-Leste. The conference covered, among other areas, a national anti-corruption strategy and an anti-corruption commission. The Prime Minister also established an Inspector-General working group to advise on necessary reforms required to expand the competence of the Office of the Inspector-General and to assume the role of an Auditor-General of State.

The Government is also working to strengthen an independent and strong civil service. Earlier this year, the Council of Ministers approved preliminary measures for the establishment of a civil service commission, which will be an independent statutory authority. It will aim to ensure an apolitical, merit-based civil service of the highest professional standards and able to provide quality services to the Government and people of Timor-Leste.

In that same area, I would like to draw the Council's attention to an extremely positive development in Timor-Leste — the functioning of our National Parliament. The National Parliament has developed into a credible and dynamic forum for debate and dialogue. Discussion there is often difficult, as with parliaments the world over, but it is also reasoned and productive. It is a new experience for us Timorese to have our representatives debate public policies so openly and to consider such a wide range of opinions.

During the reporting period covered by the Secretary-General's report, new challenges have arisen that require a proactive and vigorous response from the Government. The Prime Minister, when introducing the law on the rectifying budget to the National Parliament on 18 July, described those challenges, many of which will be familiar to the Council as they are related to international conditions and are not specific to Timor-Leste. The challenges include the drastic worldwide increase in the price of basic commodities, such as rice, which the Prime Minister called a "silent tsunami". Timor-Leste is a country that depends on the importation of basic foodstuffs and, as the situation has changed, so must the Government respond. The rectifying budget contemplates measures needed to ensure that our people have the basic necessities of life. All of the gains of the past years, including those in areas in which international assistance has been provided, could be lost in instability if the Government is not proactive in response to new circumstances.

The economic stabilization fund, with a capital of $240 million, is an important tool that the Government is employing to tackle the effects of the rising cost of food and other commodities, such as fuel and construction materials, throughout the world. The packages we have offered to returning IDPs, pensioners and other vulnerable groups through cash transfers will be of little use if they find themselves in a scenario whereby previously estimated costs are no longer relevant in future months. Meeting the demands of our population with regard to food and shelter goes hand in hand with meeting our security obligations. The fund will be governed in an open and transparent manner, with all procurement following Government procurement laws and all expenditure subject to external auditing.

For the first time, the Timorese State will ensure social protection for those scarred by war and for the dependants of those who dedicated their lives to the struggle for national liberation. Categories for those entitled to a pension are families of deceased combatants; veteran combatants with more than 15 years' service; those disabled by the war who have been unable to work; and the elderly over 55 years of age with a total of over eight years of active service. The number of pensions granted was 12,538, with 631 pensions for living combatants and 11,907 to the widows and families of fallen combatants. Timor-Leste's sovereignty today is a product of the sacrifices made by many thousands of our citizens, whom we will never forget.

Timor-Leste is ever strengthening its bilateral relationships. The Governments of Timor-Leste and Indonesia have decided to jointly discuss and agree on arrangements for the implementation of the recommendations of the final report of the Truth and Friendship Commission. Some of the recommendations have already been the subject of joint efforts, such those pertaining to the issue of border demarcation. In a spirit of mutual respect, and to further promote friendship and reconciliation between the peoples of our two countries, we have committed ourselves to the faithful implementation of the Commission's recommendations, which will be integrated into a plan of action within the framework of existing bilateral cooperation mechanisms.

The Commission's report represented a historic and important milestone in the search for truth and justice with regard to the events of 1999. The recommendations of the report aim to address unresolved issues of State responsibility towards the victims of violence referred to in the report. Above all, we have a duty both to the victims and to future generations to ensure that our society never again faces similar violent conflict.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize the unique partnership between Timor-Leste and the United Nations. We have made many strides forward in the past nine years. At this stage of our country's development, we cannot afford to lose focus. UNMIT is performing a critical a role and we are eager to see the United Nations remain in Timor-Leste. Keeping in mind that a substantive review of UNMIT's mandate is due in early 2009, I would like to suggest to the Council that, in order to cement the success of our partnership, the United Nations should maintain a substantive peacekeeping presence in Timor-Leste until the next election cycle, that is, until the year 2012.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Timor-Leste for his statement.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Philippines.

Mr. Davide (Philippines): At the outset, the Philippines wishes to do three things. First, we would like to thank you, Mr. President, for holding this meeting to discuss the latest report of the Secretary-General on Timor-Leste (S/2008/501) and, at the same time, to congratulate the Belgian presidency on its very able stewardship of the Council during the month of August. Secondly, we would like to welcome His Excellency Mr. Zacarias Albano da Costa, Foreign Minister of Timor-Leste, and to thank him for honouring us with his presence today and for his important statement this morning. Thirdly, we would also like to thank Mr. Atul Khare, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his briefing and for his major accomplishments.

Regardless of the vicissitudes of time, the Philippines maintains an excellent relationship with Timor-Leste. The Philippines participated in the International Force in East Timor in 1999, as well as in all succeeding United Nations operations in Timor-Leste. The Philippines will, in whatever way possible within its capacity, support Timor Leste's nation-building efforts. The Philippines' own experience and current problems in the areas of peace and security binds it in solidarity with the aspirations of Timor-Leste.

The Philippines views the positive developments in Timor-Leste with great satisfaction. In that connection, the leaders and the people of Timor-Leste with great satisfaction should be commended for their demonstrated capacity in recent months to overcome crises of grave proportions. Their endurance and resiliency following the events in February of this year may yet be a model for others in similar circumstances. As indicated in the Secretary-General's report, 11 February was the first real test of Timor-Leste's institutions. There can be no doubt at all that Timor-Leste has thus far passed the test ably and credibly.

Nonetheless, there is still a lot more to be done in many areas. As Timor-Leste courageously and persistently works to stay on course on the long, narrow and difficult road to nation-building, it is imperative for the United Nations and the international community to continue to invest time, effort and resources to assist Timor-Leste to ensure that, in the end, it will be able to proudly stand on its own. The Philippines very respectfully submits that those investments may focus on at least three key areas.

First, with regard to security, there should be no let up in the support for ongoing efforts to reconstitute the National Police Force of Timor-Leste (PNTL) and ensure its eventual resumption of policing responsibilities. The United Nations Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) should continue its key role in rebuilding the PNTL, but should consider national ownership as a central element in that process. It must facilitate a gradual transition and, at the same time, continue to provide support in terms of monitoring, giving advice when requested, offering operational support and, in extremis, assuming interim law enforcement responsibilities, if required and requested.

Secondly, on socio-economic development, the Philippines reiterates that the creation of job opportunities, especially for young people, and the alleviation of widespread poverty should remain major priorities. It has been noted that there has been no significant progress since independence, in 2002, in the area of poverty alleviation or in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). However, steps are being taken to proceed in the right direction, such as including addressing the needs of young people and the generation of employment in the national priorities for 2008. The Philippines specifically welcomes the signing, on 8 August 2008, of the 2009-2013 United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) between Timor-Leste and the United Nations. We expect that UNDAF's five-year $314 million programme will address the lack of progress in poverty alleviation and in the achievement of the MDGs. UNDAF will serve to guide the support provided by the United Nations country team in Timor-Leste. It is hoped that all concerned will work closely with the Government of Timor-Leste to support the implementation of UNDAF.

Thirdly and finally, on judicial reform, there can be no disagreement at all on the view that no democratic country can achieve social and political stability, economic growth and prosperity and justice and peace unless it has an independent, effective and efficient judiciary. The judiciary is the last bulwark of democracy, the guardian of the rule of law and the protector of the people's rights. That kind of a judiciary promotes and strengthens good governance. Having personally dedicated more than seven years of my public life to the reform of the judiciary in the Philippines, I am heartened to hear that attention continues to be paid to the strengthening of the judiciary of Timor-Leste, including as regards the ongoing capacity development of judicial personnel.

The Philippines supports and encourages UNMIT's involvement in the training courses for national court actors undertaken by the Legal Training Centre. It is reported that several persons have been sworn in as probationary judges, prosecutors and public defenders. They will receive on-the-job training and mentoring from international and national mentors for a one-year period. Thereafter, they will be evaluated and sworn in officially. We look forward to more reform programmes, such as on institutional integrity, access to justice by the poor and effective court systems and procedures, with the aim of ensuring the expeditious delivery of fair, equal and impartial justice and strict adherence to the rule of law.

We are pleased to inform the Council that, from 11 to 12 August 2008, the Philippines hosted a State visit by President José Ramos-Horta of Timor-Leste. On the occasion of that visit, three important bilateral agreements were signed by the relevant ministers and witnessed by the Presidents of the Philippines and Timor-Leste. Those agreements include a memorandum of agreement on academic cooperation, a memorandum of understanding for fisheries cooperation and a memorandum of understanding between the Philippines foreign service and Timor-Leste's Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the training of Timor-Leste diplomats.

The memorandum of understanding on academic cooperation, referred to by President Ramos-Horta as his "favorite project", encourages cooperation in various educational activities, in particular as regards the training of Timorese students in the English language in Philippine colleges and universities. The memorandum of understanding on fisheries aims to promote cooperation in the sustainable development and responsible management of fisheries, as well as to promote mutual consultation and economic cooperation

on agreed areas in fisheries. The memorandum of understanding on the training of Timor-Leste diplomats institutionalizes and enhances collaboration in human resources training and development in the field of diplomacy.

In conclusion, the Philippines reiterates its conviction that Timor-Leste is still one of the best examples of a successful international enterprise engineered through the combined cooperative efforts of United Nations regional players and partners. The international community must maintain its attention on Timor-Leste in order to keep it on the track of development, progress, prosperity and stability as a strong democracy under the rule of law.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the representative of Japan.

Mr. Takasu (Japan): I would like to add my sense of empathy and solidarity to the feelings expressed with regard to Sergio de Mello and his colleagues, who sacrificed their lives for the cause of the United Nations. Whenever we talk about East Timor, we think about him.

I wish to express my appreciation to Mr. Atul Khare, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his dedicated work and for his very helpful briefing this morning. I am also grateful to His Excellency Mr. Zacarias Albano da Costa, Foreign Minister of Timor-Leste, for affirming the strong determination of his Government to achieve sustainable stability.

Since the regrettable incident that occurred last February, political leaders in Timor-Leste have demonstrated the capacity to better handle security disturbances. The marked improvement in the overall security situation is most welcome. The Joint Command of the armed forces and the national police has effectively maintained public order. The Government succeeded in persuading the rebellious "petitioners" group to surrender without violence, which was followed by the resolution of that long-standing issue. Thus, one of the fundamental factors affecting the security situation in Timor-Leste has been successfully addressed.

In order to ensure its stability, Timor-Leste must have the national capacity to police itself. The United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) and the Government of Timor-Leste have jointly developed a strategy for the phased transfer of policing responsibilities to the National Police Force of Timor-Leste (PNTL). We are pleased with the steady progress made in the screening and certification of police officers. At the same time, that process must proceed prudently, in tandem with actual progress in the reform and capacity-building of the national police. We should avoid any setbacks and earn people's trust and confidence in the process. We therefore support the Secretary-General's recommendation that the existing strength of the UNMIT police force be maintained through the current mandate and that the PNTL receive appropriate support during the transition period.

We acknowledge the positive developments in the security sector. We must also express concern over the reported misconduct by some military and police officers, particularly during the period of operation under the Joint Command. It has to be emphasized that members of security institutions must abide by the law under any and all circumstances. Now that the state of emergency has ended, all PNTL officers report to the UNMIT Police Commissioner, and the Government needs to draw a clear distinction between the role of the armed forces and that of law enforcement institutions. The armed forces must be accountable to the democratically elected Government.

In order to ensure sustained stability and pave the way for long-term peace, it is essential to develop economic and social infrastructures and to create opportunities for all, particularly young people. Focused attention should be given to socio-economic and humanitarian issues during the current mandate period. It is encouraging that a significant number of internally displaced persons have returned to their communities in recent months and that many camps have already been closed. The vital support provided by the International Organization for Migration, UNICEF and other United Nations agencies under the leadership of UNMIT is highly appreciated. We should now intensify our efforts to finally solve this long-standing problem without losing momentum.

Timor-Leste is fortunate to possess great resources generated by oil revenues. While there is some logic in utilizing those revenues to meet short-term emergency needs, effective and well-planned use of those funds to contribute to the country's long-term development must be given consideration. In that context, a good investment in the education, training and capacity-building of Timorese personnel is

critically important for sustainable development. The economic activities of the private sector, local as well as international, should be supported and promoted. This would create a wide range of opportunities for young people.

The major challenge and the principal focus with regard to Timor-Leste are now shifting from the stage of simply maintaining security to that of achieving peacebuilding and durable peace and stability. Regional peacebuilding is a long, complex and multidimensional process. Japan is ready, together with other partners, to support the national efforts of the Government and the people of Timor-Leste, who are the principal actors in this transformation. It is essential to bear in mind the importance of having coordinated and planned strategies. UNMIT and the international partners have so far made significant contributions to the peace and stability in Timor-Leste. In respecting the views of the Government of Timor-Leste, Japan will continue to follow closely the progress of peacebuilding efforts and to develop the most appropriate ways to support such efforts. Japan looks forward to the medium-term strategy to be included in the next report of the Secretary-General.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the representative of Brazil.

Mr. Tarrisse da Fontoura (Brazil): At the outset, permit me to congratulate you, Sir, on your work as President of the Security Council for the month of August and to express the satisfaction of my delegation at the decision to hold a meeting on Timor-Leste. I would also like, through you, to welcome Foreign Minister Zacarias Albano da Costa and to reaffirm to him Brazil's commitment to Timor-Leste, its stability, its prosperity and our common future. By the same token, I thank the Special Representative, Mr. Atul Khare, for his presentation and his tireless efforts for the benefit of Timor-Leste.

A little more than a month ago, President Lula visited our fellow Portuguese-speaking country and had the opportunity to strengthen our historic bonds with the people of Timor-Leste. On that occasion, he said:

> "Timor-Leste expects peace, stability and development. It is necessary to create conditions that will enable the Timorese to fully realize their potential. They can count on Brazil in that regard."

President Lula's statement highlights the Brazilian efforts in Timor-Leste. Having been engaged with the country since the beginning of its process of independence, Brazil was active on the diplomatic front in New York and made concrete contributions to the United Nations missions on the ground since 1999: the United Nations Mission in East Timor; the International Force, East Timor; the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor; the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor; and the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT). Although he did so in his international capacity, it was a Brazilian, the late Sergio Vieira de Mello, who supported the country on its path towards independence and democracy. Today marks exactly five years since the lives of Sergio and 20 other colleagues were taken in an act of terror, and we pay tribute to them.

At present, Brazil's bilateral cooperation with Timor-Leste is significant, running the gamut of subjects: judiciary training and legal development, education, agriculture, professional capacity-building, military cooperation, the fight against hunger and poverty, the training of diplomats, and sports. An executive cooperation group is already in operation to identify priority areas and to formulate projects of mutual interest to our countries. The sum of those efforts epitomizes two of the principles guiding our engagement: first, action should promote the long-term sustainability of the country; and secondly, the international presence should encompass not only the military and police aspects, but also the promotion of development.

By the same token, Brazil is confident that the leadership of Timor-Leste will be able to use oil revenues to promote general welfare and long-term prosperity. We congratulate the Timorese Government and the United Nations on the signing of a five-year plan to reduce poverty, consolidate democracy and provide basic social services. We are encouraged by the finalization of a second national development plan, which should be adopted soon.

Brazil holds a view close to that of the Secretary-General regarding the heinous act of violence against President Ramos-Horta and Prime Minister Xanana Gusmão early this year: it demonstrated the ability of the Timorese institutions to respond to crises while exposing some fragilities in its security sector. In that sense, we support the recommendations to maintain the

police component of UNMIT. We also reiterate our understanding that the United Nations must stay in Timor-Leste as long as required lest a new precipitous withdrawal cost the international community all the investment it has made in that country. We agree with the Secretariat that a brief postponement of the medium-term strategy is a wise move in order to make it more attuned with the goals that will be set for Timor-Leste by the Timorese themselves.

The assistance provided by the United Nations is not equalled by any other organization or individual country. The multilateral framework is the correct one to direct the international presence in Timor-Leste and to maximize cooperation. United Nations support will continue to be needed in the ongoing reform and strengthening of the security sector.

Brazil also welcomes the conclusions of the Truth and Friendship Commission and expresses its expectation that matters will be treated in accordance with the will of the Timorese people and its Government towards reconciliation and justice.

To conclude, I would like to make another reference to the words of President Lula:

> "Timor-Leste is a symbol, an example, of our struggle for a just and solidary international order. It expresses a collective aspiration to a world where peoples share the benefits of material progress and live in peace and harmony".

The President (*spoke in French*): I give the floor to the representative of New Zealand.

Ms. Graham (New Zealand): First, I join others in paying tribute to the memory of Sergio Vieira de Mello and other United Nations staff members who so tragically lost their lives in Baghdad five years ago.

New Zealand welcomes this debate on the situation in Timor-Leste. May I thank Foreign Minister Da Costa and Special Representative Khare for their presentations. I also thank the Secretary-General for his report on the situation in Timor-Leste.

New Zealand is a regional partner and friend of Timor-Leste. We are committed to assisting its Government and people through multilateral and bilateral mechanisms. We strongly support the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) and the need for a sustained United Nations presence to help Timor-Leste. There are long-term challenges to Timor-Leste, and the United Nations is uniquely placed to assist it to stand on its own and to ensure that precious gains are not lost.

A great deal of work remains to be done, but we are encouraged by the progress being achieved in Timor-Leste following the elections last year. As outlined in the Secretary-General's report, there have been a number of positive developments over the past six months. We congratulate the Government and people on their effective response to the crisis created by the assassination attempt on the leadership in February.

The Secretary-General's report does, however, touch on areas of immediate concern to New Zealand. First, in the area of policing, we acknowledge the importance of the process of progressively handing over responsibilities from United Nations police back to the National Police of Timor-Leste (PNTL). The criteria used to assess the PNTL's state of readiness should help ensure that it is ready. The criteria should also help to identify areas where further support from UNMIT and others may be needed to strengthen PNTL capabilities. Given the critical importance of that process, it should not be rushed. Very careful attention is needed in setting criteria that are appropriate and measurable.

We also believe that the area of police training needs similar attention in order to be sure that United Nations and bilateral assistance is coordinated and coherent. As a starting point, a single policing model needs to be agreed. Those issues will warrant the special attention of the new Police Commissioner when he or she is appointed.

Another area of concern relates to the national army's involvement in maintaining public security. We see risks associated with that, especially while the security institutions are still developing. Furthermore, potentially positive contributions by the army can be seriously undermined by allegations of human rights violations and a perceived lack of accountability. We are particularly concerned about references in the Secretary-General's report to threatening behaviour by army personnel directed at United Nations personnel, as well as reports of excessive force and intimidation during arrests by members of the Joint Command. We emphasize to the military and police leadership and the Timor-Leste Government the importance of promoting

and protecting human rights, and of ensuring that violations are dealt with appropriately. Every effort needs to be made to counter perceptions of impunity. I particularly welcome Minister Da Costa's comments in that regard.

We also hope to see progress on the security sector review and continue to believe that it is essential to ensuring long-term stability in Timor-Leste. We encourage the Government and UNMIT to continue to intensify their efforts in that regard.

The Secretary-General has outlined plans to provide in his next report a medium-term strategy to be agreed with the Government of Timor-Leste, containing benchmarks and indicators for UNMIT's mandate. That will assist all stakeholders to better assess UNMIT's performance and will inform decisions about future changes in its mandate.

In conclusion, we continue to offer our support and encouragement to the leaders and people of Timor-Leste, as well as to Mr. Khare and the UNMIT team. We look forward to the visit to New Zealand later this month by Prime Minister Gusmão, Minister Da Costa and other ministers. We also thank the Security Council for its ongoing support for Timor-Leste and are grateful in particular for the leadership of South Africa in that respect.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Australia.

Mr. Goledzinowski (Australia): In my personal capacity and on behalf of my Government, I should like to add our tribute to the memory of the 22 United Nations staff members, including Sergio Vieira de Mello, who were murdered five years ago in the tragic and vile terrorist attack against the United Nations compound in Baghdad. I first met Sergio in Dili, Timor-Leste, many years ago, and I worked for him briefly as his Chief of Staff when he first assumed the position of High Commissioner for Human Rights. I was in Baghdad in those dreadful days when the attack happened.

Some bear the ultimate sacrifice in the service of peace. The rest of us must dedicate ourselves to completing their unfinished business. It is therefore appropriate that the Council should return to the situation in Timor-Leste on this anniversary. Australia welcomes the opportunity to participate again in the Council's deliberations.

I should like to go on record endorsing the remarks I have heard today from the Foreign Minister of Timor-Leste and Mr. Khare.

During the most recent deliberations in February, Australia and others called on Timor-Leste to take greater responsibility for its future through political and economic reform, the development of the private sector and the provision of health care, education and housing. We have been heartened by Timor-Leste's efforts over the past six months and by the progress made on a number of long-standing challenges, including the issues of internally displaced persons and petitioners, which have been mentioned by others. The Government of Timor-Leste responded quickly, positively and effectively to the shocking shooting attacks on President Ramos-Horta and Prime Minister Gusmão that took place on 11 February. Its civil and military institutions worked together and took primary responsibility for responding. The citizens of Timor-Leste should also be commended for their unity in the wake of the attacks.

Australia would also like to praise the efforts of Timor-Leste's partners, in particular the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) under the very able leadership of Mr. Atul Khare. It is UNMIT's ongoing support to the Timor-Leste Government which provides the enabling environment and the stability to allow the Government to move forward, as it is doing.

While Timor-Leste has made good progress, the Secretary-General's report (S/2008/501) makes clear that Timor-Leste will require continued strong support from the United Nations and bilateral partners. In Australia's view, nowhere is this more apparent than in the security sector; all previous speakers have referred to this. We note that the United Nations is working with the Government of Timor-Leste to ensure a smooth handover of policing responsibilities, and we welcome the criteria developed by Timor-Leste and UNMIT to gauge the readiness of the national police to assume responsibility. However, we strongly encourage UNMIT and Timor-Leste to ensure that the handover is undertaken in accordance with achievement of those criteria rather than with any fixed timetable. The challenges facing the police should not be underestimated and will take many years to address. Until the police force has been significantly strengthened, it will be vital to retain an ongoing strong United Nations presence to underpin security. Without that, other gains will be jeopardized.

I can assure the Council that Australia will remain engaged and will play a substantial role in assisting Timor-Leste: first, through our leadership of the International Stabilization Force, with the strong support of New Zealand; secondly, through our role as a leading development partner of Timor-Leste; and finally, through Australia's enhanced engagement over the coming years in terms of providing assistance to Timor-Leste's police and military forces.

As Timor-Leste turns its mind increasingly to longer-term security and development challenges, the international community must remain fully engaged and must remain fully coordinated.

The President (*spoke in French*): I call next on the representative of Malaysia.

Mr. Ali (Malaysia): Let me first of all congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of August 2008 and thank you for convening this open debate on the situation in Timor-Leste. We also congratulate Ambassador Le Luong Minh, Permanent Representative of Viet Nam, on his successful presidency of the Security Council for the month of July 2008. My delegation joins others in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Zacarias Albano da Costa, Foreign Minister of Timor-Leste. We wish to express our appreciation to Mr. Da Costa for being present at this open debate and for providing us with valuable insight into the developments in Timor-Leste.

My delegation also wishes to thank the Secretary-General for his report on the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) (S/2008/501) and Mr. Atul Khare, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Timor-Leste, for his briefing on the situation in that country.

The events of 11 February 2008 that saw the attacks on President José Ramos-Horta and Prime Minister Xanana Gusmão rattled not only the people of Timor-Leste but also the international community at large, in particular neighbouring countries such as Malaysia. Many were concerned that this could undo the many positive developments that have been achieved in Timor-Leste as it begins to move out of a post-conflict situation. The quick reaction by the Government of Timor-Leste, in close cooperation with UNMIT, in handling the situation and preventing the incident from veering onto the path of further violence and uncertainty, is commendable and proves that the people of Timor-Leste desire peace and stability in their country. The international community must respect and support that desire and in this regard should continue to work together towards making peace, stability and development in Timor-Leste a permanent reality.

We are pleased to note from the report and the briefing by the Special Representative that significant progress has been made in many areas, including security sector reform, rule of law and governance, political reconciliation and social and economic development. But there is still much to be done to strengthen those areas in order to avoid backsliding to a situation of instability. We are encouraged by the steps taken by UNMIT, the United Nations system in general and international partners in implementing long-term solutions to the challenges faced by Timor-Leste.

We note that UNMIT has been effective in discharging its mandate. We commend the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the hard work he has undertaken, together with the Government and the people of Timor-Leste, in ensuring that peace and stability prevails; to our mind, that is essential for the development of the country. We remain supportive of UNMIT. We agree with the Secretary-General's observation related to avoiding a precipitate adjustment of the mandate and strength of UNMIT at the moment. We concur also with the view stated by the Secretary-General in his report and the findings of the expert mission to Timor-Leste on policing (see S/2008/329) that long term efforts are needed to give proper traction to the reform of the security sector, especially with regard to reconstituting the National Police Force of Timor-Leste (PNTL), properly integrating the rule of law, implementing economic and social development and building effective and sustainable democratic institutions and governance.

At the same time, the national institutions of Timor-Leste should continue to be engaged and should be given sufficient time, under the guidance of UNMIT, to enable those institutions to nationally own all the reforms and programs undertaken by UNMIT. That will ensure that initiated reforms and projects will have a better chance of enduring beyond the conclusion of UNMIT's mandate.

My delegation firmly believes that a successful transformation of Timor-Leste towards peace and

stability will require continuing commitment and assistance by the international community. In that regard, I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate Malaysia's continuing support for and cooperation with Timor-Leste, both bilaterally and multilaterally. The Malaysian police was one of the first police contingents to be deployed to Timor-Leste under UNMIT following the disturbances in 2006 and continues to remain the second largest police contingent under UNMIT. Malaysia continues to provide assistance in human resource development for officials from the Timor-Leste Government through our technical cooperation programme.

In conclusion, I would like to express my delegation's appreciation to Mr. Atul Khare, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Timor-Leste, and to Ambassador Dumisani Kumalo, Permanent Representative of South Africa and Chairman of the contact group on Timor-Leste, for providing leadership to UNMIT and the contact group, respectively, and to congratulate them on their efforts in working closely with the Government and the people of Timor-Leste and the international community in ensuring more progress on achieving peace, stability and development in Timor-Leste.

The President (*spoke in French*): I call next on the representative of Portugal.

Mr. Lobo de Mesquita (Portugal): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting. I will start by welcoming Foreign Minister Zacarias da Costa of Timor-Leste and expressing our appreciation for his most valuable contribution to today's discussion.

I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his most recent report on the situation in Timor-Leste (S/2008/501). My thanks go also to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Atul Khare, for his excellent presentation. I take this opportunity to convey to Mr. Khare my Government's deep appreciation for the work he is doing in Timor-Leste. Portugal also commends all the staff of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) for their dedication and accomplishments.

Portugal agrees with the Secretary-General's balanced, pragmatic and thorough analysis of the overall situation in the country. We are pleased to emphasize the many achievements of the people of Timor-Leste. We reiterate the paramount importance of the continued presence and commitment of the international community, in particular of UNMIT, to help consolidate political stability and foster national reconciliation and socio-economic development in the country. As on past occasions, we underline the fact that the common efforts of the international community can be successful only if they are consistent with the sovereign will of the Timorese people.

Portugal commends the role played by the State institutions, Government, political parties and the whole of society during and in the aftermath of the terrible events of February 2008. The fact that the country has not been drawn back into a major crisis is an encouraging sign of growing institutional maturity and the people's trust in the functioning of State mechanisms. In particular, the firm action by the Government in tackling the issues of the Falintil-Forças de Defesa de Timor-Leste (F-FDTL) petitioners and internally displaced persons is noteworthy.

In that context, we encourage the Government of Timor-Leste to integrate measures, such as financial compensation packages for internally displaced persons and the petitioners, into a sustainable, long-term economic strategy aimed at reducing poverty; creating employment and generating income, especially among the youth; and developing social protection mechanisms. Initiatives to ensure lasting reconciliation should also complement those financial settlements.

In addition to ensuring peace and security, UNMIT is playing a paramount role in supporting the authorities of Timor-Leste in their efforts to surmount key challenges, such as the review and reform of the security sector, comprehensive institutional enhancement across the public sector, and the strengthening of justice.

Moreover, with regard to the holistic reform of the security sector, the cooperation between F-FDTL and the National Police of Timor-Leste (PNTL) is a core element of peace and stability in the country that needs to be duly promoted. In that context, Portugal supports the gradual transfer of policing responsibilities from UNMIT to PNTL on the basis of the latter's operational capabilities rather than of artificial deadlines. It is therefore important to ensure the necessary capacity and training of PNTL, notably through UNMIT and bilateral assistance.

Since 1999, Portugal has committed €442 million in official development assistance to Timor-Leste and

concentrated its cooperation in crucial areas, such as justice and education. Our cooperation extends to many other areas in response to requests from the national authorities of Timor-Leste, and it is oriented towards helping to promote a culture of democratic governance and reinforcing the rule of law and supporting sustainable economic and social development, while ensuring a coordinated approach to cooperation efforts.

Besides that important bilateral contribution to cooperation with Timor-Leste, my country is fully committed to supporting UNMIT in its mandate implementation efforts. Portugal contributes to UNMIT with police officers and a Formed Police Unit operating in Dili and its surroundings, as well as with civilian staff, for a total of approximately 200 individuals. As the largest bilateral donor to Timor-Leste and a police contributor to UNMIT, my country is proud to be able to assist the people of Timor-Leste in their efforts to consolidate democracy and development in the country.

Before concluding, I wish to stress the important support and solidarity extended to Timor-Leste by the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries in the areas of political and diplomatic action and cooperation.

Finally, I cannot end my remarks without associating myself with the tribute paid to the memory of Sergio Vieira de Mello, a great friend of Timor-Leste and a symbol of the highest values and principles of the United Nations. Having had the privilege of meeting him in Timor-Leste, I know that he is as deeply missed there as he is here today.

The President (*spoke in French*): There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I invite Council members to continue their discussion on the matter in informal consultations.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.

Security Council

Sixty-third year

Provisional

5959th meeting

Tuesday, 19 August 2008, 1.50 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Grauls	(Belgium)
Members:	Burkina Faso	Mr. Kafando
	China	Mr. Li Kexin
	Costa Rica	Mr. Urbina
	Croatia	Mr. Skračić
	France	Mr. Renié
	Indonesia	Mr. Natalegawa
	Italy	Mr. Mantovani
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Elgannas
	Panama	Mr. Suescum
	Russian Federation	Mr. Kravchenko
	South Africa	Mr. Kumalo
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Bayley
	United States of America	Mr. DeLaurentis
	Viet Nam	Mr. Bui The Giang

Agenda

The situation in Timor-Leste

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (S/2008/501)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

08-46530 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 1.50 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Timor-Leste

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (S/2008/501)

The President (*spoke in French*): Pursuant to the invitation extended to the representative of Timor-Leste at the 5958th meeting of the Security Council under rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, I invite the representative of Timor-Leste to take a seat at the Council table.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Miranda Branco (Timor-Leste) took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in French*): The Security Council will continue its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

After consultations among members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council:

(*spoke in English*)

"The Security Council welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) (S/2008/501), as well as the briefing by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Timor-Leste, Mr. Atul Khare, on 19 August 2008.

"The Security Council commends the political leadership and State institutions of Timor-Leste for the rapid, firm and responsible manner that respected constitutional procedures of the country, in which they responded to the deplorable events of 11 February 2008. The Council acknowledges that while progress has been made in the overall security situation in Timor-Leste since the events of May-June 2006, the political, security, social and humanitarian situation in the country remains fragile.

"The Security Council welcomes the continued efforts to foster dialogue and national reconciliation in Timor-Leste through various mechanisms, in particular the expanded High-level Coordination meetings, the Trilateral Coordination Forum, as well as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General's continued good offices. The Council also welcomes recent progress in addressing the situation of the internally displaced persons.

"The Security Council reaffirms the continued importance of the review and reform of the security sector in Timor-Leste, in particular the need to ensure clear separation of internal and external security roles and responsibilities between the National Police (PNTL) and the military, to strengthen legal frameworks and to enhance civilian oversight and accountability mechanisms. The Security Council recognizes efforts made by the national authorities and UNMIT for the reconstitution of the National Police of Timor-Leste and welcomes the report of the expert mission to Timor-Leste on policing of 16 May 2008 (S/2008/329) and the necessary steps taken to implement the recommendations of the report. The Council underlines that the building of an independent, professional and impartial national police service in Timor-Leste is a long-term process, that national ownership is a central element in this regard, and that UNMIT has a key role to play in helping to ensure that the PNTL is ready and able to resume its policing responsibilities.

"The Security Council recalls the need for the sustained support of the international community to Timor-Leste to develop and strengthen its institutions and to further build capacities in the justice sector.

"The Security Council further reaffirms the importance of ongoing efforts to reach accountability and justice, and underlines the importance of the implementation of the recommendations of the Independent Special Commission of Inquiry report of 2006 by the Government of Timor-Leste. It welcomes the conviction of the leaders of Timor-Leste on the need for justice and their determination to act against impunity. The Council underscores the

importance of the promotion and protection of human rights.

"The Security Council recognizes the need to address socio-economic challenges in Timor-Leste. In this regard, the Council welcomes the launching of the national priorities for 2008 by the Government of Timor-Leste, including public safety and security, social protection and solidarity, addressing the needs of youths, employment and income generation, improving social service delivery, and greater transparency and effective Government. It also welcomes the signing between Timor-Leste and the United Nations of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework 2009-2013, which can provide the country with an important instrument on its path to development.

"The Security Council reaffirms its full support for UNMIT in its work and appreciates the continued efforts of the Secretary-General and his Special Representative to ensure the full implementation of the mandate of UNMIT. It encourages UNMIT, in accordance with its mandate, to continue to cooperate with the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes as well as all relevant partners to support the Government of Timor-Leste. The Council recalls its requests to the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Government of Timor-Leste, to develop a medium-term strategy with appropriate benchmarks to measure and track progress and to submit further reports as and when he considers appropriate."

(*spoke in French*)

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2008/29.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 1.55 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.5960

Security Council

Sixty-third year

Provisional

5960th meeting

Tuesday, 19 August 2008, 1.55 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Grauls	(Belgium)
Members:	Burkina Faso	Mr. Kafando
	China	Mr. Li Kexin
	Costa Rica	Mr. Urbina
	Croatia	Mr. Skračić
	France	Mr. Renié
	Indonesia	Mr. Natalegawa
	Italy	Mr. Mantovani
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Elgannas
	Panama	Mr. Suescum
	Russian Federation	Mr. Kravchenko
	South Africa	Mr. Kumalo
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Bayley
	United States of America	Mr. DeLaurentis
	Viet Nam	Mr. Bui The Giang

Agenda

Peace and security in Africa

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08-46536 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 1.55 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Peace and security in Africa

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Mauritania, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Ould Hadrami (Mauritania) took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in French*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

I now give the floor to the representative of Mauritania.

Mr. Ould Hadrami (Mauritania) (*spoke in French*): First of all, Mr. President, I would like to express my sincere thanks to you for giving me this opportunity to provide the Council with a clarification of the situation resulting from the corrective change that took place on 6 August 2008 in Mauritania. I would like also to thank the Security Council for its interest in stability and democracy in Mauritania.

The Security Council, which is entrusted with the maintenance of international peace and security in line with the purposes and principles of the United Nations, is an important organ to which Mauritania has always expressed its commitment. We also reiterate our commitment to the Charter of the United Nations and our respect for all the agreements, treaties and conventions concluded on behalf of the Mauritanian State.

Today's consideration of the situation in Mauritania requires us to update the Council on that situation and the conditions under which the 6 August 2008 changes took place. I must recall that, in August 2005, the Military Council for Justice and Democracy (CMJD) put an end to 21 years of a despotic regime that had brought the country to the brink of explosion. In less than two years, the CMJD had brought about a democratic transition that was welcomed by the international community, led by the United Nations.

The culmination of this transition came in 2007 with the universally accepted and transparent election of the first democratically-elected President of the Republic in the history of the country, who garnered almost 53 per cent of the vote. The new President was fully enabled to carry out the electoral programme for which he was elected and for which the people had great expectations, specifically in terms of economic and social development in the fight against poverty and insecurity.

A presidential election alone is not a sufficient criterion, however, to measure the degree of success of democracy in a country. Among other things, it is particularly the way in which those in power carry out their missions and how the executive power ensures the performance of the institutions of the Republic and how it responds to the expectations of the population regarding security and economic and social well-being.

Instead of attempting to realize the aspirations of the Mauritanian people, the former President of the Republic found himself held hostage by a political entourage, which diverted him from his most important mission. Dangerous abuses and a series of terrorist acts, previously unknown to Mauritania, marked the presidency of the former President of the Republic.

It was during this time that four French tourists were murdered in cold blood near Aleg on 24 December 2007 by operatives affiliated with Al-Qaida, who then fled abroad but were stopped with the cooperation of friendly countries. They were imprisoned in Mauritania and then escaped, but were subsequently recaptured. The ambush and murder of three Mauritanian army officers by operatives of Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb or ex-GSPC occurred a few days later in the north of Mauritania. On 1 February 2008, the Israeli embassy in Nouakchott was the object of an attack with automatic weapons, leaving many injured among passers-by and patrons of a nearby restaurant.

This rampant insecurity has injected fear and distress into the hearts of the Mauritanian people, who are known for their love of peace and tranquillity and their rejection of all forms of violence, and for whom this situation is completely unfamiliar. The economic and social situation of the country was not very good, much like the security situation. The prices of basic foodstuffs kept mounting from day to day, making these provisions inaccessible to the most vulnerable sectors of the population. Corruption, underhanded dealings, vote-buying, nepotism and the diversion of public funds were an everyday occurrence.

Instead of managing the country's real problems, the former President of the Republic entered into an outright dispute with the majority party in the Mauritanian Parliament, which had only asked him to allow it to carry out its duties without constraint, as recognized by the Mauritanian Constitution. For example, the majority of the Parliament had requested the convening of an extraordinary session in order to carry out an investigation into certain public institutions. The former President of the Republic categorically refused this request, thus calling to into question the principle of the separation of powers, one of the foundations of democracy.

Mauritania, a moderate Islamic country, has never allowed the creation of Islamic political parties, as Islam is the religion of all Mauritanians and no group has the right to take over the religion of an entire people. It was under the former President's weak exercise of power that Islamic political parties were authorized for the first time in the country. To top off this series of mishaps, failures and blockages, the former President of the Republic, without informing those concerned in advance, recklessly fired all the country's military leaders by means of a communiqué read out over the radio during the early morning of 6 August 2008. Taking into account the importance of the military in our country, the way the military command was eliminated constituted a useless provocation. This action could have led to incalculable consequences, which those who do not well understand Mauritania and its tribal, ethnic and regional complexity, cannot possibly comprehend.

The situation which I have just briefly described led to the corrective change which occurred on 6 August 2008. This change was supported by two-thirds of the parliament, by the majority of the mayors in Mauritania and by broad populist movements throughout the country. It has also been denounced, however, by a minority of Mauritanians, each of whom have every right to voice their opinions, since fundamental liberties are guaranteed by the High State Council.

The parliament of Mauritania has not been dissolved, the institutions of the Republic are functioning as normal, we have a free press, legal political parties continue their activities without restriction and human rights are protected. In sum, the High State Council has quickly proven that it is more than capable of preserving and strengthening democracy in Mauritania.

The situation in Mauritania is stable and calm, life is normal and the people occupy themselves with their daily affairs. The administration is functioning normally and there are no political prisoners. Only the former President of the Republic, for reasons of security, is under house arrest. Nevertheless, he has access to press and television reports, his doctor does not leave his side and his dietary needs are dutifully satisfied — he has fresh camel's milk delivered daily to his residence.

The corrective change of 6 August cannot be qualified as a coup d'état because all the institutions of the Republic are functioning normally and fundamental liberties have been preserved. Rather, the present state of affairs is the consequence of factors which had put the country's peace and social cohesion in danger. I can therefore assure members of the Council that Mauritania has not turned its back on democracy.

On the contrary, the hope, born out of the democratic transition prior to April 2007, is still alive. Mauritania reconfirms its commitment to democratic values and remains convinced that democracy is the key to development. It is important, however, to understand that each country is different and will reach the true realization of democracy at its own pace. It is useless to impose a schedule which does not take these differences into account. Such an approach is counter-productive and will not be understood by peoples who have their own specific methods. This current stage is simply a phase in the development of the country's democratic foundations. The people of Mauritania have already begun to enjoy the benefits of democracy and will no longer accept restrictions upon their free will. This is why, being fully cognizant of the interests of

the country, the people of Mauritania fully supported the corrective change of 6 August 2008.

Taking this into account, we believe that the Security Council should fully understand the situation and its realities in Mauritania. It should carry out an objective evaluation, on the ground, of the conditions in which the corrective change of 6 August took place, taking the country out of an inertia which was leading it inexorably to an uncertain future.

Indeed, a choice was made between the continuation of a weak and unpopular regime and a future of a country, faced with challenges of underdevelopment, poverty and insecurity. The President of High Council of the State, General Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, did not hesitate for an instant to make the choice. He has already named a civilian Prime Minister who has, on behalf of the Government, quickly arranged to hold free and transparent elections, among other actions. The international community should help Mauritania to place its young democracy on a solid foundation in order to combat underdevelopment. Do not side with a power that has demonstrated its limitations and thereby effectively open the door to a world of uncertainty.

We wish wholeheartedly for the Security Council to contribute to the rectification of the situation in Mauritania, taking into account the hopes of the majority of its people and supporting the corrective change of 6 August 2008. This would contribute to the development of stability and prosperity of the country and to international peace and security.

The President (*spoke in French*): Following consultations among members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council.

"The Security Council condemns the Mauritanian military's overthrow of the democratically elected Government of Mauritania and welcomes the statements condemning the coup by the African Union, the European Union and other members of the international community.

"The Security Council opposes any attempts to change Governments through unconstitutional means.

"The Security Council condemns the actions of the State Council, in particular its move to seize the powers of the presidency.

"The Security Council demands the immediate release of President Sidi Mohamed Ould Cheikh Abdallahi and the restoration of the legitimate, constitutional, democratic institutions immediately.

"The Security Council recognizes the important role played by the African Union as well as the support of regional and international partners, including the United Nations Secretary-General through his Special Representative for West Africa, Mr. Said Djinnit, and calls on all to assist in restoring constitutional order in Mauritania.

"The Security Council will monitor developments in this situation."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2008/30.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on the agenda.

The meeting rose at 2.10 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.5961

Security Council

Sixty-third year

Provisional

5961st meeting

Tuesday, 19 August 2008, 4.15 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Grauls	(Belgium)
Members:	Burkina Faso	Mr. Kafando
	China	Mr. Wang Guangya
	Costa Rica	Mr. Urbina
	Croatia	Mr. Vilović
	France	Mr. Lacroix
	Indonesia	Mr. Natalegawa
	Italy	Mr. Mantovani
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Ettalhi
	Panama	Mr. Arias
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	South Africa	Mr. Kumalo
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir John Sawers
	United States of America	Mr. Wolff
	Viet Nam	Mr. Le Luong Minh

Agenda

The situation in Georgia

Letter dated 19 August 2008 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of France to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2008/561)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

08-46619 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 4.15 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Georgia

Letter dated 19 August 2008 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of France to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2008/561)

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Georgia, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Alasania (Georgia) took the seat reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in French*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in response to a letter dated 19 August 2008 from the Chargé d'affaires ad interim of the Permanent Mission of France to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council, contained in document S/2008/561.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Lynn Pascoe, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs.

It is so decided.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Edmund Mulet, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations.

It is so decided.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear briefings by Mr. Lynn Pascoe, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, and by Mr. Edmond Mulet, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations. I now give the floor to Mr. Pascoe.

Mr. Pascoe: The most important event since my last briefing on Georgia, on 11 August, was the agreement to six principles sponsored by the presidency of the European Union (EU), which led to the end of the military hostilities. While the members of the Council are fully aware of those principles, I would like to reiterate them for the record.

The first is the commitment by all parties to renounce the use of force. The second is the immediate and definitive cessation of hostilities. The third is free access to humanitarian aid. The fourth is the withdrawal of Georgian forces to their places of permanent deployment. The fifth is the withdrawal of Russian forces to their lines of deployment prior to 7 August 2008. That includes the additional provision that "pending the definition of an international mechanism, the Russian peacekeeping forces may implement additional security measures". The sixth is the convening of international discussions on lasting security and stability arrangements for Abkhazia, Georgia, and South Ossetia, Georgia.

Discussions on the implementation of those principles are continuing. The Secretary-General has been engaged in consultations with all concerned parties. In those consultations he has called for the cessation of all military acts and for unimpeded humanitarian access to all those in need in all of the affected areas. While welcoming the fact that the ceasefire plan has now been signed by both the Russian Federation and Georgia, the Secretary-General stressed the need for it to be implemented and for all forces to immediately withdraw as required. With all of his interlocutors the Secretary-General has reiterated the importance of respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia. The Secretary-General's Special Representative, Mr. Jean Arnault, who is on the ground in Georgia, is in close contact with parties there. The Secretary-General has also dispatched Mr. Johan Verbeke to Brussels as his representative. Mr. Verbeke took part in a coordination meeting with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the EU. Close cooperation between all the

relevant institutions is clearly important in the efforts to solve the present crisis.

The Permanent Council of the OSCE took an important decision today in Vienna to deploy immediately 20 additional military monitoring officers to Georgia. That will bring the total number of such officers to 28. The request of the OSCE is to eventually raise that number to 100. The deployment of additional military monitoring officers is subject to further decisions. The de facto South Ossetian authorities have stated that they would only accept Russian peacekeeping forces and that international observers would not be welcomed on their side of the ceasefire line. Yesterday, they asked the Russian Federation to establish a permanent military base in South Ossetia.

With regard to the situation on the ground, Mr. Mulet will again brief the Council on the developments in and around Abkhazia. I shall limit myself to sharing available information on South Ossetia and Georgia proper. As I mentioned before, the United Nations has a limited presence in the area and must therefore largely rely on secondary sources.

The Russian leadership announced that it would start withdrawing its troops on Monday, 18 August. Press reports make it clear that that has yet to get under way on a significant scale. As of today, the Russian troops remain in and around Gori in Georgia, although there are some reports indicating that a convoy of armoured vehicles and tanks left Gori for South Ossetia early today. Foreign Minister Lavrov indicated that the withdrawal of troops would take three to four days. Russian military authorities explained that Russia started the withdrawal of rear units and troops of the third echelon. The vanguard troops now in Georgia will be the last to withdraw. The Russian General Staff indicated that the withdrawal would intensify after 22 August. At the same time, the Russian military has stated that Georgia has not returned all of its troops to their bases.

The de facto president of South Ossetia dismissed his Government on 17 August and declared a month-long emergency to cope with the aftermath of recent hostilities. He has criticized his cabinet for the slow response to the needs of displaced and affected people. The South Ossetian de facto authorities reported over 2,100 dead as a result of the conflict. Georgia disputes those figures, while humanitarian agencies on the ground cannot independently verify that information. The investigative committee of the Russian Federation, which is conducting an investigation of events at Tskhinvali, had recovered 60 civilian bodies by 17 August. Russian peacekeepers in South Ossetia lost 74 men, according to official sources.

On the Georgian side, officials reported 215 military and 69 civilians killed during the hostilities. Seventy military personnel are missing in action. An exchange of Russian and Georgian prisoners of war took place today near the village of Igoeti, south of Gori.

Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have reported serious human rights abuses. There have been reports of looting in South Ossetia, the town of Gori and other surrounding villages in Georgia. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights has dispatched an officer to Georgia to provide human rights support and advice to the United Nations country team, as well as to conduct a preliminary assessment of the human rights situation there.

As a result of the recent hostilities, 158,600 people have been displaced. That figure includes 98,600 displaced within Georgia, about 30,000 displaced within South Ossetia and another 30,000 displaced in other parts of the area. The overall planning figure for IDPs remains at 128,600, including 30,000 displaced to Russia from South Ossetia, on the basis of data obtained from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The number of those in need of immediate assistance, including people fleeing from the Upper Kodori area of Abkhazia, from South Ossetia and from the town of Gori, has risen to 89,000. From the currently available data, it appears that approximately 50 per cent of the IDP population has been registered.

Today and tomorrow, UNHCR is sending two planeloads consisting of 30.4 tons of non-food items to Vladikavkaz in North Ossetia, Russia, following the acceptance by Russian authorities of an aid offer from the High Commissioner for Refugees Antonio Guterres. The High Commissioner is visiting Georgia today. He will then travel to Moscow for high-level meetings and to Vladikavkaz. He is also planning to visit South Ossetia, Georgia.

The President of the International Committee of the Red Cross visited Vladikavkaz yesterday but was unable to enter South Ossetia. Several non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have

complained of difficulties in gaining access to South Ossetia, where Russia's Emergencies Ministry has been coordinating a major relief effort. United Nations agencies continue to appeal to all parties for the opening of a humanitarian corridor.

As of 18 August, a number of locations, including the town of Gori, are accessible for the first time since the conflict began. Given the opening of the humanitarian corridor allowing east-west access in Georgia, the distribution of humanitarian relief is gaining momentum beyond Gori and as far west as Poti. United Nations humanitarian agencies were in Gori for a short visit and were able to bring some essential water and hygiene supplies. The town appeared deserted, save for the presence of the elderly and persons who were too sick to move. Water and electricity lines have been reconnected. There is no cooking-gas supply. Some apartment buildings have clearly suffered damage.

On 18 August, an interagency flash appeal for Georgia was issued. Ten United Nations agencies and 15 NGOs participated in the appeal. The flash appeal was also launched today in Tbilisi by the Resident Coordinator and by the Prime Minister of Georgia. The flash appeal is requesting approximately $56 million for six months of assistance to those affected by the crisis. As of 18 August, more than $24 million in contributions has been registered on the Financial Tracking Service of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, with an additional pledge of $3 million having been made.

The Secretary-General's position on Georgia has been clearly reflected in his various public statements on this issue. Full implementation of the six principles would allow for the provision of humanitarian assistance to those affected, defuse the situation and offer hope that a political solution to the problems can be found. The United Nations stands ready to facilitate international discussions in that regard and to take part in any concrete arrangements for a settlement.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Pascoe for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Edmond Mulet, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations.

Mr. Mulet: Allow me to update the members of the Council on the situation that has prevailed in and around the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict zone since my last briefing, on 11 August.

In a key development, on 12 and 13 August, the Abkhaz side launched a military operation in the Upper Kodori Valley. No actual close combat took place, because the Georgian armed personnel in the Upper Kodori Valley had been withdrawn beforehand. Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili accused Russia and the Abkhaz side of expelling the entire ethnic Georgian population from the Valley. The team base of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) in the Upper Kodori Valley remains closed. The Mission is considering launching a patrol there to assess the situation.

During the previous week, the Abkhaz side HAD crossed the ceasefire line on several occasions despite warnings from UNOMIG not to do so, causing agitation among the local Georgian population. The crossings took place mainly in the areas of the Ganmukhuri and Khurcha "pockets" along the ceasefire line on the Zugdidi side. Occasionally, the Abkhaz crossed over to Georgian villages in the north of the Zugdidi sector, but they withdrew on the advice of the peacekeeping force of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). One serious incident occurred on 17 August, when two Abkhaz personnel were killed and two others wounded as a result of the explosion of a radio-controlled landmine in the Ganmukhuri Patriot Youth Camp.

The Zugdidi town and district administrations and the police are functioning. Through the continuous presence and patrolling of UNOMIG, the local population in Zugdidi town has been reassured that, despite the tense situation, there is no direct threat to them. The people who left the town at the beginning of last week have started to return home, and at the moment it appears that almost all of the population has returned to Zugdidi. An issue of serious discontent between the administration and the CIS peacekeeping force remains the fact that the force is still occupying several buildings in Zugdidi town.

The Mission has been able to monitor major movements of CIS and Russian troops along the main road, the M27, on the Zugdidi side. It has concluded that some of those forces are concentrated along the southern edge of the zone of conflict. UNOMIG is not in a position to confirm the number of those troops. Outside the conflict zone, the Russian forces have

reportedly conducted operations to destroy military assets at the Senaki military base and at Poti harbour. No targeting or damaging of public infrastructure has been reported in those areas.

UNOMIG has continued to patrol in the Zugdidi sector. It has resumed patrolling in the Gali sector, but only along the main road for the time being.

Finally, I would like to mention an important issue that could have implications for our area of operations. As members are aware, UNOMIG counts on CIS peacekeeping forces to provide security for our military observers and our installations. However, on 14 August, the Georgian parliament unanimously voted in favour of Georgia's withdrawal from the Commonwealth of Independent States. By a unanimous vote, the parliament also adopted an appeal to the international community to replace the CIS peacekeepers with "international peace contingents". Yesterday, the Georgian Foreign Ministry advised that it had sent a note to the CIS Executive Committee notifying it of the aforementioned resolution and of Georgia's renunciation of all obligations related to its membership in the CIS as of 18 August 2008. A day earlier, the Abkhaz de facto foreign ministry had stated that it considered it necessary to maintain the presence of a considerable contingent of Russian peacekeepers on its territory as a security guarantor.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Mulet for his briefing.

I now call on the representative of Georgia.

Mr. Alasania (Georgia): Thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting.

In my previous addresses to the Council, we asked this body to act swiftly to stop the aggression that my country was facing. Unfortunately, the state of affairs in Georgia has not changed, despite the ceasefire agreement reached a few days ago. The Russian side continues to violate agreed ceasefire arrangements. At the moment, the entire territory of Abkhazia, Georgia, and South Ossetia, Georgia, together with the cities of Zugdidi, Senaki and Poti in western Georgia and Gori and Kaspi in eastern Georgia, are under Russian occupation.

Georgia is occupied by Russian military forces, forces that are determined to devastate my country. Their actions have crossed all imaginable boundaries of common sense. Roads, bridges, railway tracks and other Georgian communications infrastructure have become targets of the Russian armed forces. Russian forces continue their attacks on Georgian seaports, oil refineries and terminals. Russian naval forces are blocking Georgian seaports and have destroyed vessels of the Georgian coast guard.

In addition to that, Georgian came under a cyber attack from the Russian side, causing a shut-down of Georgian information sources for the rest of the world. Moreover, Russian forces have completely destroyed and looted Georgian military bases in Senaki and Gori, and now are proceeding towards the Sachkhere mountain training centre. Russia is continuously conducting reconnaissance flights in sovereign Georgian airspace.

Looting, destruction and murder have become commonplace. Russian militaries are conducting raids in various parts of Georgia and keeping the population under constant threat and in constant terror. The population is in fear that the next destroyed city will be theirs.

All of that is aimed at destroying Georgia as a sovereign independent State and is in contravention of the commitments undertaken by the Russian side to stop the violence and withdraw. Through its aggression, Russia threatens the freedom and ability of Georgia and other emerging democracies throughout Eurasia to build political, legal and judicial systems without fear of external threats or domination.

The total number of people killed in the armed conflict reached 250 on the Georgian side as of 19 August. Sixty-nine of them were civilians; 133 of those killed were Georgian Ministry of Defence personnel, including four servicemen from the reserve troops, and 13 were from the Ministry of the Interior. Over 1,469 have been injured, and 446 of those remain in hospitals; according to reports, that toll will increase. The Government of Georgia regrets the human losses in all communities of Georgia. Our deepest sympathies go to the families of the deceased victims of this brutal, provocative war.

I would like to focus attention on the humanitarian crisis unfolding in Georgia in the territories occupied by the Russian armed forces. Moscow has decisively chosen ethnic cleansing as an instrument for achieving its political aims. Ethnically based robberies, persecution and slaughter are reported from the Russian-occupied territories. As a

consequence, ethnic Georgians are forced to flee their homes and seek shelter in cities under the control of the Georgian authorities. More than 150,000 citizens of Georgia are displaced. I quote Human Rights Watch: "The remaining residents of these destroyed ethnic Georgian villages are facing desperate conditions, with no means of survival, no help, no protection, and nowhere to go".

The Moscow-backed, self-proclaimed Mr. Kokoity, has declared that the de facto South Ossetian authorities will not allow the Georgian population to return to their homes. As was reported and affirmed by Tskhinvali authorities, they have burned down the houses of ethnic Georgians to ensure that the Georgians will not have places to return to.

Russia's aggressive actions have no boundaries. Russian armed forces attacked the Borjomi Forest Park, a unique 1,000-year-old Georgian heritage site. Even further, Russians refused to grant access to firefighting aircraft and vehicles to put out the fire.

I would like to thank the countries, United Nations entities and non-governmental organizations that have stepped forward and are providing much-needed help to citizens of my country. Humanitarian efforts are not as successful as they could be because United Nations agencies and other humanitarian organizations have no access to the conflict zones because of the Russian refusal to provide access to the occupied territories. We urge everyone to exercise their utmost powers to ensure that humanitarian help and relief will be provided to those in need without any impediment.

Russian troops have invaded an independent country and have settled themselves on our territory. Towns and villages are bombed; peaceful citizens are robbed, tortured and killed; and the victims are numerous. Thousands of people are left homeless. Under the aegis of the so-called unilateral peace enforcement operation, Russian troops are annexing an independent country. The transport infrastructure of the country is paralysed. After these barbaric actions from the Russian side, no arrangements in which Russia is perceived as a mediator or guarantor will be acceptable to the Georgian people.

Georgia once again adhered to the principles agreed through the European Union presidency and President Sarkozy's mediation. We are complying with the ceasefire agreement reached and fully commit ourselves to it. We demand the same actions from the other party to the conflict. The Russian Federation has to withdraw its forces to the pre-conflict locations. Along with full respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Georgia within its internationally recognized borders, which cannot be questioned, the ceasefire has to be backed with a subsequent Security Council resolution. Georgia stands ready to accommodate any legitimate security concerns that the Abkhaz, Georgian and Ossetian population of Georgia might have through direct dialogue and truly international negotiations.

Having described the ravaged situation in Georgia, I am still looking forward to creating certain conditions that will only be possible after the occupation of Georgia, when it will be possible to discuss the rebuilding of severely damaged Georgian-Russian relations.

We appeal to the Council to act — and act decisively.

The President (*spoke in French*): I call now on the representative of France.

Mr. Lacroix (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to begin by thanking you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting at the request of my delegation. Allow me also to thank Under-Secretary-General Pascoe and Assistant Secretary-General Mulet for their briefings and the Permanent Representative of Georgia for his statement.

France has requested that this important and urgent meeting be held because we are extremely concerned by the current situation in Georgia. I would like to recall the context that led us to call for this meeting. Following 7 August, over the course of almost a week, fierce fighting occurred in the separatist enclave of South Ossetia and then, with the intervention of the Russian army, throughout Georgian territory, particularly in Abkhazia.

Historical accounts will say that it was a series of provocations and reactions, but one thing is clear: Georgia's actions were followed by a brutal and disproportionate reaction by Russia. The violence has claimed numerous victims — at least hundreds of dead — and caused tens of thousands of refugees and displaced persons to take to the roads. Whole villages have been destroyed. Instability has once again flared up on the flank of Europe, threatening peace in the

region and risking serious tensions in international relations.

From the outset, France, on behalf of the European Union, has undertaken massive efforts at the highest levels to bring an end to the hostilities. The French Minister for Foreign Affairs, Bernard Kouchner, visited Tbilisi with his Finnish counterpart, the current Chairman of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. President Sarkozy in turn visited the region, where he met President Medevedev in Moscow and President Saakashvili in Tbilisi.

The President Sarkozy's mediation on behalf of the European Union made it possible for the Russian Federation, Georgia and the two separatist entities to commit, in writing, to a six-point plan, which the European Council has also endorsed. The plan does not resolve everything, but it constitutes the essential — and the only — basis that we have to reach a lasting solution. The signatories have undertaken permanently to cease hostilities and not resort to force. They have also committed, on the Russian side, to withdraw immediately to their pre-7 August positions and, on the Georgian side, to return to their usual quarters.

It is essential that arms be put down, but that does not mean that withdrawal any less essential. We should be clear: it is the Russian forces that are primarily concerned. The Georgian army was dislocated by the deployment at a surprising speed of a Russian force with massive, excessive numbers. It was completely driven out of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. On the rest of the territory of Georgia, a number of its essential bases were taken over, occupied or partially or fully destroyed by the Russian army. I am thinking in particular of Gori, Poti, Senaki and Kaspi. Combat operations have ceased, the Georgian army has been almost entirely destroyed. Russian forces must now withdraw in keeping with the undertakings entered into. By definition, this commitment can only be fulfilled by Russia.

On 12 August, President Medvedev undertook to withdraw these forces. Since no movement was apparent, the President of the French Republic reminded him of his commitment on several occasions. On 17 August, he again contacted President Medvedev, who undertook to begin the withdrawal at mid-day on 18 August. The information from the ground and that brought to us from the Secretariat show that nothing or almost nothing has occurred. We even understand that new weapons have been introduced by Russia into Georgian territory. The President of the French Republic has met again today with Mr. Medvedev, who assured him that the withdrawal would begin by 22 August. We hope of course that this announcement will be given effect.

The Russian withdrawal is an essential component for full implementation of the six-point plan in order to achieve a lasting peace agreement and an international mechanism to guarantee that peace. France and the European Union are more determined than ever to work to achieve this goal. The European Union has expressed its commitment to working on the ground. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) is beginning to get involved, even if only modestly, with the deployment of 20 additional observers.

During this difficult period, our attention should not be turned away from the humanitarian situation. I would remind all parties of their commitment to guarantee full humanitarian access on the ground. France also would like to remind the parties of their obligations stemming from the Sochi accords and subsequent agreements on the necessity to maintain order and prevent irregular forces from causing the civilian population to suffer damage. France also wishes to recall that it is a matter of urgency that refugees and displaced persons must be allowed to return promptly to their homes.

Lastly, we welcome the exchange of 20 prisoners that occurred today through the mediation by the Ambassador of France in Tbilisi. We hope that the agreement of protocol signed at that time will be extended to many further exchanges of this type.

We would like as rapidly as possible to achieve a lasting solution which respects the sovereignty, territorial integrity and the independence of Georgia. The withdrawal of forces is a necessary precondition. Therefore, we have circulated to the Council today a draft resolution that is very simple. It is necessary to respect undertakings entered into in the six-point ceasefire agreement. The agreement must be implemented in good faith, and the forces, particularly the Russian forces, must be withdrawn to their respective positions. It is essential that the Council be able to express in a united fashion how urgent this necessity is. It is also essential to our capacity to

continue our collective efforts in the future to restore peace to this region.

Mr. Mantovani (Italy): This is a time of great and deep concern over the continued instability in and around Georgia. We are convinced that the Security Council cannot delay its action any longer. We do have in place a ceasefire agreement accepted by the parties and endorsed by the main international players, including the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the European Union. Now, we expect the full, immediate and visible implementation of this agreement.

The draft resolution introduced by France aims at nothing more than this, without blaming any particular side for the current apparent stalemate. Moreover, we cannot fail to reiterate our commitment to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia, which is being called into question.

Obviously, there are other dimensions of this crisis which are of equal concern to us, including the impact on other countries of the region and the worrisome humanitarian situation. Yet it is now time to focus on the most immediate goals. The adoption of the draft resolution before us would be a first essential step towards a comprehensive settlement of the current crisis.

I would like to conclude by confirming that Italy is ready and willing to contribute to the increase of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) monitors contingent as decided in Vienna earlier today. This additional effort would complement ongoing initiatives in the area of humanitarian assistance.

Mr. Wolff (United States of America): I would also like to extend my thanks to Mr. Pascoe and Mr. Mulet for their briefings, and to welcome Ambassador Alasania to the Council.

The United States remains deeply concerned by the situation in Georgia. We deplore the loss of life, civilian casualties and extensive damage to civilian facilities throughout the country.

We support the call for an emergency meeting today because of continuing Russian military operations against Georgia despite agreement by the parties, specifically Russia and Georgia, to a ceasefire.

As of today, Russia's occupying forces reportedly remain throughout Georgia, including in Poti, Senaki and Gori. These Russian forces continue to destroy civilian infrastructure, block Georgian highways and impede the functioning of a humanitarian corridor.

We continue to receive reports that international humanitarian organizations, including the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), continue to be denied access by Russia to South Ossetia, the region hardest hit by this conflict. By denying access, Russia is preventing what UNHCR estimates to be 128,000 internally displaced persons and thousands of other civilians from receiving assistance, despite repeated appeals by humanitarian groups.

We have disturbing reports from areas of Georgia under Russian control. Russian forces have looted Georgian facilities, destroyed essential infrastructure and allowed paramilitary bands to do the same. Georgia's main rail bridge near Kaspi was blown up on 16 August. Russian naval vessels are destroying Georgian ships and disrupting civilian shipping. This situation cannot continue.

We are gravely alarmed by the humanitarian situation, particularly in those parts of Georgia under the de facto control of Russian forces and their irregulars, where international human rights groups have reported serious human rights abuses. We demand that Russian forces fulfil their responsibility to prevent such human rights violations and call for an immediate investigation into the atrocities that are alleged to have occurred behind Russian lines.

Statements by the so-called South Ossetian president Kokoity and other de facto officials regarding their intentions to displace ethnic Georgians completely from South Ossetia are reprehensible and should be condemned by the international community. Such gratuitous incitement of ethnic hatred has no place in the twenty-first century.

Finally, we express our readiness to engage in international discussions on the modalities for security and stability in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Whatever the final outcome of these discussions, one thing is clear now: South Ossetia and Abkhazia lie within Georgia's internationally recognized borders. There is no room for debate on this point.

The United Nations Security Council has adopted numerous resolutions concerning Georgia. These

resolutions are based on the premise that South Ossetia and Abkhazia remain within the borders of Georgia and that their underlying conflicts will be resolved through international negotiations. Russia itself has endorsed these resolutions. The international community is clear that South Ossetia and Abkhazia are part of Georgia, and the United States fully recognizes this reality.

We will continue to stand behind Georgia's democracy. We will continue to insist that Georgia's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity be respected.

When this armed conflict erupted, we heard from the Russian representative that his Government was acting to defend its peacekeepers and civilians in the South Ossetia region of Georgia. Yet the military actions Russia has undertaken continue to belie that claim.

Even in its early stages, Russia's military offensive and political objectives went far beyond any reasonable or credible limit consistent with its claims. Russia has expanded its operations far beyond the conflict zone into areas that have nothing to do with South Ossetia. We have seen a deepening and widening Russian offensive that includes the opening of a second front in Abkhazia and the occupation of Georgian territory.

The objectives of this offensive suggest Russian intentions to weaken and subjugate Georgia, a sovereign country with a democratically elected Government that poses no threat to Russia.

Last week, French President Sarkozy, acting on behalf of the European Union, launched a diplomatic effort to attain a ceasefire. The United States strongly supported that effort. After Russian President Medvedev agreed to the proposed terms of a ceasefire, Secretary of State Rice travelled to Tbilisi to obtain Georgia's agreement. Georgian President Saakashvili approved the ceasefire terms on the understanding that his Government's agreement would lead immediately to a cessation of hostilities and withdrawal of Russian forces to the status quo ante of 6 August. This did not happen. Despite the Georgian agreement, the Russian military offensive continued.

On 17 August, two days after the Georgian President signed the ceasefire agreement, Russian President Medvedev undertook to begin Russia's withdrawal on 18 August. This did not happen. Russian operations continued in an effort to consolidate the occupation and continue to destroy Georgia's infrastructure.

We meet today on 19 August, seven days after President Medvedev agreed with French President Sarkozy's plan, four days after Georgia's President Saakashvili signed it, three days after Russian President Medvedev signed it, two days after President Medvedev promised to begin the withdrawal, and more than 24 hours after that last promise was supposed to take effect.

Against this backdrop of Russia's continued military offensive and diplomatic delaying tactics, we support the French delegation's draft resolution calling for immediate compliance with the terms of the agreement, to which Russia, Georgia and other parties subscribed, and particularly for the immediate withdrawal of Russian forces from Georgia in accordance with that agreement.

Sir John Sawers (United Kingdom): I thank Mr. Pascoe and Mr. Mulet for their briefings to the Council, and I welcome Ambassador Alasania.

On 11 August, in this Chamber, the United Kingdom and others welcomed the French-led efforts to secure an immediate end to the fighting in Georgia. The culmination of those efforts was the six-point agreement signed by Russia and Georgia a week ago, together with the agreed clarifications issued by President Sarkozy.

One week on, however, the Russian Federation has failed to implement its part of the agreement. Russian forces have not complied with the requirement to withdraw to their positions prior to 7 August. Russia has spoken publicly of its intention to withdraw, and we have heard statements from Moscow claiming that withdrawal has begun, but we see little evidence of this on the ground. On the contrary, Russian forces remain in their positions deep inside Georgia, way beyond the conflict zones of South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

We are equally troubled by the actions of the Russian forces now occupying Georgian territory. Since 7 August, we have seen a systematic attempt to destroy Georgia's infrastructure. On the military side, naval patrol boats have been sunk at their moorings. Barracks and other military installations well beyond the conflict zone have been levelled. And Russian forces have destroyed civilian infrastructure too. I

would like to ask the Russian ambassador what justification there could possibly be for Russian forces destroying a railway bridge on the main east-west rail link and for blocking a tunnel on a major road. Why do Russian checkpoints continue to block civilian traffic on major transit routes, in breach of President Sarkozy's clarifications to the 12 August agreement? Only yesterday, the United Kingdom's defence attaché to Georgia was turned back from a Russian checkpoint in Georgia and told he required a Russian visa in order to proceed further. Do foreigners now need Russian visas to travel within Georgia?

It is hard to see how Russian actions are consistent with Russia's claimed justification for their military assault — namely the protection of its peacekeepers and civilians in South Ossetia and Abkhazia, even though most of those civilians have only recently been handed Russian passports and have not lived in Russia.

I think the facts make it clear that this is a conflict between Georgia and Russia. Russian spokesmen try to present the problem as a conflict between Georgia, South Ossetia and Abkhazia, with Russia's role one of peacekeeper. That claim was always doubtful. The last two weeks have demonstrated beyond any doubt that Russia is a party to the conflict. Indeed, Russia's letter last week, saying that they were acting under Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, confirmed that they are a party to the conflict, and Russian actions since 7 August have gone way beyond those of a peacekeeper or mediator. So let us not pretend that this is anything other than a conflict between Russia and Georgia, a conflict which Russia has clearly won militarily. Russian forces in Georgia are now, in effect, an army of occupation, and they will remain so until they withdraw to the positions held prior to 7 August and force levels return to those that prevailed then.

We remain gravely concerned too by the humanitarian situation in Georgia. We are particularly disturbed by reports of killings and ethnic cleansing perpetrated by South Ossetian and Abkhaz irregulars, in areas controlled by Russian forces. It goes without saying that Russia has a legal and moral obligation to prevent such acts, but, instead, what we have seen is the eviction of virtually all ethnic Georgians from South Ossetia. We welcome the visit of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to the region. The return of refugees and internally displaced people will be an important element of any long-term settlement of the conflict in Georgia.

Russia's failure to withdraw its forces, and the actions of those forces, raise questions about Russia's objectives in Georgia and about its willingness to honour the agreement signed by President Medvedev. They also call into question Russia's commitment to some of the founding principles of the United Nations and to respect for the resolutions of the Security Council, which have consistently upheld Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The United Kingdom calls on Russia to take immediate steps to comply with the agreement it has signed and to end its military aggression in Georgia. First and foremost, that means immediate withdrawal of Russian forces to the lines held prior to the outbreak of hostilities. There can be no excuse for further delay, and for that reason we support the draft resolution that has been put forward by France.

Mr. Vilović (Croatia): Allow me first of all to join previous speakers in thanking Under-Secretary-General Pascoe and Assistant Secretary-General Mulet for their briefings.

In previous meetings and consultations, my delegation has made clear its position with regard to the ongoing conflict, so we shall limit ourselves to a few points that we find particularly important or see as new and relevant elements with regard to the situation in Georgia.

Croatia welcomes the six-principle agreement, signed by Georgia and Russia through the diplomatic efforts of the European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the United States, to end the hostilities and reach a political solution to the conflict. According to that agreement, all military action must cease and military forces must return to their positions held prior to the outbreak of hostilities. We call on all parties to the conflict to fully comply with the agreement.

Accordingly, we call on Russia to immediately withdraw its forces from those areas within Georgia that it entered following the outbreak of hostilities on 7 August, as specified in the aforementioned agreement. We also call on Georgia to return its forces to their usual bases, also in line with the situation that existed before 7 August. In that regard, we would also like to welcome today's decision of the Permanent

Council of the OSCE to appoint 20 additional military observers.

Croatia is extremely concerned also by the humanitarian situation on the ground. We deplore the loss of life and the civilian casualties resulting from the conflict. Croatia has undertaken measures in concert with international Organization and interested Governments, in order to provide much-needed assistance to the civilian population affected by the conflict. We call on all the parties to ensure that this assistance reaches all affected populations.

Croatia also reiterates its support for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia, which are recognized by international law and existing Security Council resolutions.

Finally, Croatia fully supports the draft resolution on the situation in Georgia prepared by the delegation of France as a first and necessary step towards the full implementation of the six-principle agreement. We hope that the draft resolution can be adopted expeditiously with the aim of ensuring that the parties implement the six-principle agreement in its entirety and in good faith.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): If there are no further speakers wishing to take the floor, I should like to say a few words.

At a previous meeting of the Security Council, I asked the representative of the United States a question: What, in his opinion, should the Security Council be focused on — serious political work or propaganda? At that time, unfortunately, I received no answer to that question, and today it is clear why. Unfortunately, the statements made today by the representative of the United States and others have been clear expressions of propaganda, to the detriment of the serious political work that must be done in the Security Council and the political tasks facing us today.

I believe that one can hardly fail to see that today's meeting was convened to a large extent under the influence of the North Atlantic Council foreign ministerial session just held in Brussels. I note in passing that the final statement issued at that meeting appears to be non-objective and biased and contains not a single word concerning the reasons for the conflict or about who initiated the aggression, who armed Georgia and who has consistently blocked our insistent proposals to conclude a legally binding agreement on the non-use of force. The impression has been given that, behind the convening of today's meeting, there is a wish to distract the Security Council from its task of adopting a decision endorsing the well-known Russian-French peace initiative to end the conflict and pave the way to a settlement.

Once again in this Chamber, there has been a further attempt today to turn matters on their head and to portray the aggressor as the victim. Once again, rhetoric has been bandied about accusing Russia of the most mortal sins, including some extremely wild accusations. I wish in that respect to focus on the key theme that the French delegation is now promoting for the draft resolution it has proposed for adoption by the Security Council. However, in the light of some of the remarks that have been made in the Council Chamber today, I cannot fail to say a few words first.

First, with regard to the humanitarian situation, no one is undertaking a humanitarian operation as large as that of Russia in the conflict zone. Not one country or one humanitarian organization is doing as much as Russia, not only inside South Ossetia and Tskhinvali, which was effectively wiped off the face of the Earth by the Georgian aggression, but also in some Georgian areas that we have entered, such as the city of Gori, which is in close vicinity to South Ossetia and where our military has had to deal with massive stockpiles of discarded weapons. In recent days, we have fed the civilian population there and have called on the Georgian authorities to help the people of that city, who have been abandoned to their own fate. No one is doing anywhere near as much as Russia to avoid a humanitarian catastrophe.

With respect to the international humanitarian organizations, with which we have of course sought contact, the heads of those entities have either concluded or are planning visits to Russia and the conflict zone. We therefore hope that cooperation can begin and that the international humanitarian organizations will be able to do their humanitarian work effectively in the conflict zone.

I should now like to address what may be a side issue, but one on which I wish to focus. In several statements made today, reference has been made to what President Kokoity of South Ossetia said about refugees. Our Foreign Ministry has issued a special statement on that matter which lays out the facts with

respect to international norms applying to refugees. That is undoubtedly one of the questions that will have to be settled in the process of normalizing the situation in the conflict zone.

Much has been said and many rhetorical questions have been asked on the basis of unverified information and even of disinformation. The Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom was not present when previous statements were made, but he has expressed concern about the fate of the United Kingdom's military attaché, who for some reason was in the area of conflict and was arrested. I do not know the facts of that specific situation.

As I read the statement issued today by the North Atlantic Council foreign ministerial session, I was struck by a phrase to which I would like to draw the Council's attention. It was obviously drafted by military experts and not by politicians; NATO clearly has good people working on such statements, just as we do, and they should be appreciated. I am sure that they understand each other very well in such matters. In particular, the statement reminds Russia of its obligation to maintain security and order in the areas under its control. We do not need to be reminded of that. I will cite one example to demonstrate our awareness that we bear full responsibility for security.

Some illegal activities may have occurred there; that cannot be entirely dismissed, of course, when the entire region has been destroyed as a result of the Georgian military adventure. We cannot deny that there may indeed be such circumstances, but I can state that Russian military personnel have the strictest orders to stop such illegal activity when they witness it.

Some of my colleagues are behaving as if they have not attended the five previous meetings and are now making their own interpretations of events, but I should like to recall that this is now the sixth meeting on this topic. The first was convened as Russia warned the Council that Georgia was on the verge of unleashing a military adventure. We called for that meeting on the night of 7 August; further meetings were held in the course of the conflict in an attempt to reach a settlement. That quest concluded in a meeting in the Moscow Kremlin on 12 August at which the Presidents of France and Russia read out the six-principle peace plan.

The task of the Security Council today is to support that plan and to promote progress in its implementation. Unfortunately, given the kind of propaganda we have heard today, we are merely making it harder for the Council to perform that task. We do not understand why that must be so, but returning to the core issue that the French representative touched on today, I can say the following.

The Russian side has consistently implemented its obligations. Under the Moscow six-principle agreement, by order of the President of the Russian Federation the Russian armed forces have pledged to pull back the forces and matériel provided to the peacekeeping contingents. As of today, preparations are under way to establish the logistical bases for the peacekeeping posts that, again pursuant to the Moscow agreement, are being set up as an additional security measure in the peacekeeping zone. The construction of the posts is slated to be concluded by 22 August. I stress that the pull-back of the combat units that have been attached to the peacekeeping contingents is ongoing. Rear units and military hardware are being pulled back, and the roads are being cleared for the pull-back of forward units. At the same time, in full compliance with the Moscow agreement, a security zone is being created. When the peacekeepers assume their positions on the external border of that zone, those forces that were introduced in support of the peacekeepers will return to their areas of deployment.

I should like in passing to ask the representative of the United States a question. In the course of the conflict, the United States withdrew 2,000 Georgian servicemen from Iraq. Are they going to return to Iraq? What does the future hold for them?

The withdrawal of Russian troops will be commensurate with the effectiveness of the Georgian side's implementation of its obligations under the Moscow peace plan, which stipulates first and foremost the return of Georgian troops to their places of permanent deployment: their barracks. And I would like to point out that, although Mr. Saakashvili signed the peace plan's six points and pledged to withdraw his troops, we note today that that obligation has not been fulfilled. Every day there are incidents in which our servicemen, in one part of the security zone or another, hold Georgian troops who have not yet returned to their barracks or groups of armed individuals who are present for no comprehensible reason. Such incidents seriously complicate the overall situation and hamper the process of withdrawing troops according to plan.

We appeal to all to be guided by objective criteria, not by a desire to whitewash those who initiated the aggression. We are convinced that the Council's attention should be focused on endorsing the Moscow peace plan developed by the Presidents of Russia and France. It contains six clear, consistent and logically interlinked principles for stabilizing the situation and overcoming the crisis. Singling out individual elements of the Moscow plan and interpreting them to suit the purposes of political propaganda is counterproductive, and the Russian Federation will therefore be unable to support the draft resolution submitted today by France.

The representative of France referred earlier to two of the peace plan's six principles announced by the Presidents of France and Russia. But even on those two principles everything was mixed up: the order was changed and additional suggestions were put forward. Why is this being done? During all the work we have done together with our French colleagues in recent days, was there not an understanding that the six principles of Presidents Sarkozy and Medvedev should be clearly reflected, verbatim, in a draft resolution to be adopted by the Security Council?

Incidentally, during today's telephone conversation between President Medvedev of Russia and President Sarkozy of France, to which Mr. Lacroix referred, the French head of State said not a word about any kind of new draft resolution that would bypass the 12 August agreement.

In the light of all we have said, we appeal to Council members to step up their endeavours to forge truly effective and viable decisions to resolve the situation in Georgia. The basis of such decisions should be the six principles of the Moscow peace plan.

The President (*spoke in French*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of Belgium.

I too wish to thank Mr. Pascoe and Mr. Mulet for their briefings, and would like to make the following points.

Belgium remains gravely concerned at the continued presence of Russian troops on Georgian territory despite the repeated commitments and assurances that they would be withdrawn. There is no justification for that presence, which violates the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia. Belgium reaffirms its commitment to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia within its internationally recognized borders.

Belgium is also very concerned at any action that poses a threat to Georgia's vital infrastructure. Belgium calls for respect of the ceasefire and the immediate withdrawal of Russian troops from areas from which it must withdraw by the terms of the six-point agreement signed by the Georgian and Russian Presidents on the initiative of the President of the French Republic, acting in his capacity as current President of the European Union.

Belgium believes that the international community has a crucial oversight and leadership role to play. In that connection, Belgium welcomes the decision taken by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe to rapidly deploy a larger number of observers. Belgium considers that the Security Council should remain seized of this matter with a view to helping to find a solution. In that regard, Belgium supports the draft resolution circulated by France today.

Finally, on the humanitarian front, the suffering of populations affected by this situation is clearly very worrisome. Belgium once again appeals for the free and unhampered access of humanitarian aid to the victims. I wish to stress that ensuring such access is an integral part of the six-point agreement.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

Mr. Urbina (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Pascoe and Mr. Mulet for their briefings this afternoon, and to thank the representative of Georgia for being here with us.

Eight days ago, on Monday, 11 August, I made a statement here in which I briefly summarized Costa Rica's position on this matter. Today I am taking the floor again to say that, in our view, the situation in Georgia is not a European problem; nor is it a problem that involves only the great economic and military Powers. Costa Rica firmly believes that this is a crisis in which small States that are not major economic or military Powers also have a stake. We are the majority in this Organization. Costa Rica wishes once again to emphasize the need to restore the position and

observance of international law, which guarantees the security of small countries.

We share the concerns raised by the failure to comply with commitments, in particular because those commitments were agreed upon by the parties as steps necessary to normalize the situation in Georgia. We welcome humanitarian action from any quarter, because it eases the situation of a civilian population that has been the victim of politically motivated hostilities.

The President (*spoke in French*): The representative of Georgia has asked to make a further statement, and I call on him now.

Mr. Alasania (Georgia): I have a very simple question, but before posing that question I want to say that the representative of the Russian Federation referred to the massive humanitarian intervention, of a kind that had not been seen before, which they are performing in Georgia. I just want to assure Mr. Churkin that the face of the Russian humanitarian efforts is well shown by the facts on the ground, by the destruction and the killings, and that it has been well reported by international observers, human rights observers and the international media, so I will not elaborate more on that.

The simple question is this. I could not really get a sense, regarding the very important issue on which we are gathered here today, whether the Russian Federation is intending to comply with the agreement reached by the French presidency of the European Union, to ceasefire and to end the occupation of the sovereign State of Georgia. This is a very simple question, but I really felt deliberate ambiguity in the answers provided by the Russian Federation's Permanent Representative. And by refusing to support the French-sponsored draft resolution, does that in effect mean that they are refusing to ceasefire in Georgia?

The President (*spoke in French*): I call on the representative of the Russian Federation.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I shall begin with the second question posed by the Permanent Representative of Georgia. Where is the ambiguity? I said very definitely that we are complying with and intend to implement the six principles that were worked out by the President of France and the President of Russia in the Kremlin on 12 August. In fact, I think that we and the whole international community need the support of the Security Council through an appropriate resolution supporting the six principles. For some reason, however, the Security Council does not want to do that and is being distracted by propagandistic ventures. Everything is very clear. The position of the Russian Federation is crystal clear. Unfortunately, some members of the Security Council are taking a position that is no secret to anyone. It is misleading and not constructive.

With regard to Mr. Alasania's first question, regarding the tragedy that the Georgian people are currently experiencing, he can thank Mr. Saakashvili personally and those who pushed him into the military adventure in South Ossetia.

The President (*spoke in French*): There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.5962

Security Council

Sixty-third year

Provisional

5962nd meeting

Tuesday, 19 August 2008, 5.30 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Grauls	(Belgium)
Members:	Burkina Faso	Mr. Kafando
	China	Mr. Zhao Baogang
	Costa Rica	Mr. Urbina
	Croatia	Mr. Skračić
	France	Mr. Lacroix
	Indonesia	Mr. Natalegawa
	Italy	Mr. Azzarello
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Ettalhi
	Panama	Mr. Suescum
	Russian Federation	Mr. Rogachev
	South Africa	Mr. Kumalo
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Quarrey
	United States of America	Mr. DeLaurentis
	Viet Nam	Mr. Le Luong Minh

Agenda

Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

08-46667 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 5.30 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Algeria, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Benmehidi (Algeria) took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in French*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Following consultations among members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council.

"The Security Council condemns in the strongest terms the terrorist suicide-attack that occurred in Issers, Algeria, on 19 August 2008, causing numerous deaths and injuries at a gendarmerie training academy. It expresses its deep sympathy and condolences to the victims of this heinous act of terrorism and to their families, and to the people and Government of Algeria.

"The Security Council underlines the need to bring perpetrators, organizers, financiers and sponsors of This reprehensible act of terrorism to justice, and urges all States, in accordance with their obligations under international law and resolution 1373 (2001) and consistent with resolution 1624 (2005), to cooperate actively with the Algerian authorities in this regard.

"The Security Council reaffirms that terrorism in all its forms and manifestations constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security, and that any acts of terrorism are criminal and unjustifiable, regardless of their motivation, wherever, whenever and by whomsoever committed.

"The Security Council further reaffirms the need to combat by all means, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts. The Council reminds States that they must ensure that any measures taken to combat terrorism comply with all their obligations under international law, in particular international human rights, refugee and humanitarian law.

"The Security Council reiterates its determination to combat all forms of terrorism, in accordance with its responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2008/31.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 5.35 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.5963

Security Council

Sixty-third year

Provisional

5963rd meeting

Wednesday, 20 August 2008, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Grauls	(Belgium)
Members:	Burkina Faso	Mr. Tiendrébéogo
	China	Mr. Li Kexin
	Costa Rica	Mr. Urbina
	Croatia	Mr. Skračić
	France	Mr. Renié
	Indonesia	Mr. Natalegawa
	Italy	Mr. Mantovani
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Mubarak
	Panama	Mr. Arias
	Russian Federation	Mr. Dolgov
	South Africa	Mr. Kumalo
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir John Sawers
	United States of America	Mr. Wolff
	Viet Nam	Mr. Le Luong Minh

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

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08-46697 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Lynn Pascoe, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs.

It is so decided.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

At this meeting, the Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Lynn Pascoe, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs. I now give him the floor.

Mr. Pascoe: This reporting period has seen a number of significant developments in the region. On 30 July, Prime Minister Olmert announced that he will not be seeking re-election as leader of the Kadima party in a primary scheduled for 17 September, and will therefore be stepping down as Prime Minister. Mr. Olmert is expected to remain in office until either a new government is formed by the new party leader or after general elections are held.

Despite that development, the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations continue, as do the indirect talks with Syria. There was a rise of internal Palestinian violence as Hamas took action to consolidate its hold over the Gaza Strip. The fragile ceasefire between Hamas and Israel continues to hold, but the situation on the ground in the West Bank and East Jerusalem remains a cause for concern.

The negotiations with the Palestinians as part of the Annapolis process are ongoing at both a political and a technical level, and on 6 August, Prime Minister Olmert met again with President Abbas. It would appear that the gaps between the parties' positions remain, and I reiterate the Secretary-General's call for the need to press ahead to make real progress in overcoming differences to reach the goal of an agreement by the end of this year, despite the political constraints.

During this reporting period, there was a major increase in Palestinian internal violence, contributing to an overall total of 43 Palestinians killed and 366 injured. One Israeli soldier died of injuries sustained on 11 July in East Jerusalem, and nine Israelis were reported injured.

The rise in internal Palestinian violence stemmed from an incident on 25 July in which five Hamas members and a child were killed in a beachside bombing in Gaza. Hamas claimed that the Fatah-affiliated Hillis clan were sheltering the perpetrators and attacked the clan's stronghold in eastern Gaza City, the last bastion of the Fatah military presence in the Gaza Strip. The ensuing violence left 10 members of the Hillis family dead, and dozens of members of the clan fled to the West Bank through Israel. Members of the Hillis family were detained by Hamas along with dozens of Fatah and other activists, and there have been allegations of torture committed by Hamas against detainees.

Following the 25 July bombing, Hamas initiated a well-orchestrated campaign for total control of the Gaza Strip. Hamas forces raided over 200 community-based organizations in Gaza and closed them down. The closures of those organizations disrupted activities involving thousands of beneficiaries, as 23 of the institutions are supported by United Nations agencies. Eighty of the organizations have been re-opened following Hamas review of their operations. Hamas also seized control of the last remaining Palestinian Authority institutions within the Strip, most notably the Governorates, which Hamas had previously recognized as legitimate Palestinian Authority structures and which had continued to report to President Abbas. Three Governors were detained by Hamas forces and two Governors are still in prison. Those actions severely prejudice the prospects for Palestinian reunification within the framework of the legitimate Palestinian Authority. We are also concerned at the potential consequences for United Nations operations in Gaza.

In reaction to Hamas's actions in Gaza, Palestinian security forces in the West Bank arrested dozens of Hamas activists, most of whom were later freed on the orders of President Abbas. Palestinian Authority security forces closed a number of Hamas-

linked institutions in the West Bank. Hamas and the Palestinian Authority should both release detainees seized as a result of the recent violence. That could serve as a first step in a process leading to reconciliation and the reunification of Gaza and the West Bank under the Palestinian Authority, to which the Secretary-General remains committed.

The Egyptian-mediated ceasefire that began on 19 June has largely held but remains fragile. Ten rockets and one mortar were fired from Gaza into Israel, without causing casualties. During this reporting period, no Israel Defense Forces (IDF) air strikes or incursions were reported, although one Palestinian child was injured by IDF shooting near the border. Twelve other Palestinians were killed and 34 were injured due to the collapse of tunnels along the Gaza-Egypt border. Over 25 tunnels were closed as a result of Egyptian efforts against smuggling.

Talks for the release of Israeli captive Gilad Shalit are stalled. The International Committee of the Red Cross has still not been provided with access to him after two years in captivity. We welcome Israel's decision on 17 August to release approximately 200 Palestinian prisoners as a goodwill gesture to President Abbas.

In the West Bank, three Palestinians, including two children, were killed, and 185, including 47 children, were injured during the reporting period. Both children that were killed were shot by the IDF using live ammunition against Palestinian demonstrators at Naalin village. There has also been a rise in settler violence during the reporting period, including at least 34 settler attacks on Palestinians, resulting in 35 injuries, including nine children, and extensive property damage, including an attempt to set fire to the Ar-Ras mosque in Hebron on 13 August.

Settlement activity continues across the West Bank, and particularly in East Jerusalem. On 24 July, approval was given for 20 permanent housing units at Maskiyot in the West Bank, outside the footprint of any existing settlement. We are also concerned at reports that the trailers of the Migron settlement outpost are to be evacuated in exchange for the construction of permanent residential units in other nearby settlements. Also in this reporting period, tenders were announced for over 400 new settlement units in East Jerusalem. The Secretary-General has repeatedly stated that all settlement activity in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, is contrary to the Fourth Geneva Convention and Israel's commitments under the Road Map and the Annapolis process.

On 10 August, two major checkpoints in the West Bank were partially reopened for Palestinian traffic, leading to significant improvements in access to those areas. However, the overall number of closures during the reporting period remains unchanged at 608, as some previously removed obstacles were reinstalled. The weekly average of flying checkpoints stood at 80. Construction of the barrier around East Jerusalem and within the West Bank continues, in deviation from the Green Line and contrary to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice.

The Palestinian Authority faces a budget shortfall of approximately $400 million from October to the end of the year, meaning that Palestinian Authority salaries may not be paid from the end of September. We urge, again, donors to fulfil outstanding pledges and direct external assistance to budget support. The fiscal performance of the Palestinian Authority has continuously improved and measures have been taken to strengthen the line ministries' capacity for preparing the 2009 budget and a medium-term expenditure framework for 2009-2011.

The implementation of Quartet Representative Tony Blair's May 2008 package advanced during the reporting period. Selected obstacles to movement have been eased, and on 28 July a telecommunications contract was signed between the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority, enabling a second mobile phone operator to launch in the occupied Palestinian territory. This deal was an important part of the package intended to stimulate economic growth. However, to achieve significant economic impact, all outstanding measures need to be implemented rapidly and as originally negotiated.

While the number of trucks entering Gaza during this reporting period increased by over 75 per cent compared to the previous period, it represented only 54 per cent of that in May 2007. Most basic commodities, from school stationery to mechanical spare parts to bedding, remain in short supply. Forty-two per cent of the imports were gravel, while the import of necessary complementary building materials, such as cement, steel bars and flooring materials, et cetera, remained low. Ninety-five per cent of Gaza's local industry remains closed.

There is a severe lack of fuel in the Gaza Strip, which has an impact on agriculture, as farmers are unable to run water pumps for irrigation. A lack of both fuel and spare parts means that approximately 84,000 litres of raw and partially treated sewage continue to be dumped into the Mediterranean Sea every day. Power cuts continue to occur for at least four to five hours a day across Gaza.

Normal economic and daily life is extremely difficult throughout Gaza, due to petrol shortages and the corresponding lack of transportation. The benefits of the ceasefire have not yet translated into any significant improvement in the living conditions of the people of Gaza.

Further to the Secretary-General's discussions with Prime Minister Olmert in Paris last month concerning stalled United Nations projects in Gaza, the Israeli authorities are positively considering the import of additional quantities of construction materials for United Nations priority projects focusing on housing, school construction and water sanitation. We welcome movement in this regard and hope for the early resumption of all suspended United Nations projects in Gaza.

On 29 July, a further round of indirect Syrian-Israeli talks was held under Turkish auspices. Another round of talks scheduled for this month has not yet been held, following the announcement of Prime Minister's Olmert's decision not to take part in the Kadima party primary. The situation in the occupied Syrian Golan remained quiet during the reporting period, with one incident of a Syrian infiltrator lightly wounded by the IDF on 14 August. Settlement activity in the Golan continues.

If I may turn now to Lebanon, the past month was marked both by positive political developments and continued security concerns. After several weeks of discussion among members of the national unity Government, the cabinet's ministerial declaration was agreed upon and presented to parliament. The parliamentary session that followed witnessed differences of opinion on certain elements of the proposed ministerial declaration, including the role of Hizbullah's weapons. On 12 August, the declaration received a vote of confidence through an overwhelming majority of the members of parliament. That vote represents a new and important milestone in the implementation of the Doha agreement. We welcome the intention to begin the national dialogue led by the President of the Republic, as referred to in the ministerial declaration and to consolidate the sovereignty, stability and security of the Lebanese State. The United Nations looks forward to working closely with the new Government to meet those objectives and Lebanon's obligations under the relevant Security Council resolutions.

On 13 August, Presidents Sleiman and Assad met in Damascus in their first summit meeting since the Lebanese President was elected in May. Among other commitments, the two heads of State agreed to establish diplomatic relations, to reactivate a joint committee charged with the delineation of their two countries' common borders and to take joint action to address cross-border smuggling activities. The Secretary-General welcomed those constructive decisions and encouraged both parties to begin implementation as soon as possible, in keeping with relevant Security Council resolutions.

These positive developments were shadowed by security incidents, which continue to take place in and around the northern city of Tripoli. On 13 August, hours before the Damascus summit, an improvised explosive device was detonated at a bus stop frequently used by Lebanese army soldiers in Tripoli. Fifteen people were killed in the bombing, including 10 soldiers. The Secretary-General and the Security Council vigorously condemned that brutal attack. We welcome the steps taken by the Government of Lebanon to contain the violence in Tripoli and to address the root causes of the situation.

During the period since the last Security Council briefing, the area of operations of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) has remained generally quiet. UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces have continued coordinated operational activities throughout the area south of the Litani River, in accordance with their responsibilities under resolution 1701 (2006). UNIFIL continues to record Israeli air violations, which have occurred on an almost-daily basis.

The Quartet will meet here in New York on the margins of the General Assembly in September. That will be followed by an iftar hosted by the Secretary-General with Arab partners, as well as by a meeting of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee. Those occasions will enable us to take stock of the progress that has been

made and the gaps that remain to be bridged, as well as to assist urgently in the implementation of donor pledges to address the impending Palestinian budget crisis.

The Secretary-General remains committed to a just and lasting comprehensive regional peace in the Middle East, based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002) and 1515 (2003).

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Pascoe for his briefing.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.30 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.5964

Security Council

Sixty-third year

Provisional

5964th meeting

Thursday, 21 August 2008, 5.55 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Grauls	(Belgium)
Members:	Burkina Faso	Mr. Tiendrébéogo
	China	Mr. La Yifan
	Costa Rica	Mr. Weisleder
	Croatia	Mr. Vilović
	France	Mr. Renié
	Indonesia	Mr. Natalegawa
	Italy	Mr. Terzi di Sant'Agata
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Elgannas
	Panama	Mr. Suescum
	Russian Federation	Mr. Salov
	South Africa	Mr. Kumalo
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Quarrey
	United States of America	Mr. DeLaurentis
	Viet Nam	Mr. Bui The Giang

Agenda

Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

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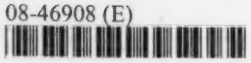

The meeting was called to order at 5.55 p.m.

Expression of welcome to the new Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like at the outset of the meeting to extend, on behalf of the Council, a warm welcome to the new Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations, His Excellency Mr. Giulio Terzi di Sant'Agata. We look forward to cooperating closely with him. I give the floor to Ambassador Terzi di Sant'Agata.

Mr. Terzi di Sant'Agata (Italy): Allow me, Mr. President, to thank you for your kind words of welcome and to express my warm greetings to the other members of the Security Council. It is a great honour for me to commence my duties as the Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations here in the Security Council. I hardly need to emphasize the importance that the Italian Government attaches to the decisive action that the Council can and must carry out in the framework of the maintenance of international peace and security.

I say these words at a time at which it is crucial that the Council be unified if it is to fulfil its role in promoting solutions to international crises in various parts of the world in a manner that is true to the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter and consistent with international law.

The world looks to the Security Council with high expectations, and I believe that all of us can rise to those expectations by promoting effective solutions, built on consensus. It is therefore in that spirit of continuity that I shall represent my country as a Council member elected by the General Assembly in these concluding months of the biennium of our membership.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like to inform the members of the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Pakistan in which he requests to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Shah (Pakistan) took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in French*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Following consultations among the members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council.

(*spoke in English*)

"The Security Council condemns in the strongest terms the twin suicide terrorist attacks that occurred in Wah Cantt, Pakistan, on 21 August 2008 causing numerous deaths and injuries. It expresses its deep sympathies and condolences to the victims of this heinous act of terrorism and to their families, and to the people and Government of Pakistan.

"The Security Council underlines the need to bring perpetrators, organizers, financiers and sponsors of this reprehensible act of terrorism to justice, and urges all States, in accordance with their obligations under international law and resolution 1373 (2001) and consistent with resolution 1624 (2005), to cooperate actively with the Pakistani authorities in this regard.

"The Security Council reaffirms that terrorism in all its forms and manifestations constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security, and that any acts of terrorism are criminal and unjustifiable, regardless of their motivation, wherever, whenever and by whomsoever committed.

"The Security Council further reaffirms the need to combat by all means, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts. The Council reminds States that they must ensure that any measures taken to

combat terrorism comply with all their obligations under international law, in particular international human rights, refugee and humanitarian law.

"The Security Council reiterates its determination to combat all forms of terrorism, in accordance with its responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations."

(*spoke in French*)

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2008/32.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on the agenda.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.5965

Security Council

Distr.: General
25 August 2008

Original: English

Official communiqué of the 5965th (closed) meeting of the Security Council

Held in private at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 25 August 2008, at 3 p.m.

In accordance with rule 55 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, the following communiqué was issued through the Secretary-General in place of a verbatim record:

"On August 25 2008, the Security Council, pursuant to resolution 1353 (2001), annex II, sections A and B, held its 5965th meeting in private with the troop-contributing countries to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon.

The Security Council and the troop-contributing countries heard a briefing under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure by Mr. Wolfgang Weisbrod-Weber, Director of the Asia and Middle East Division of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

Members of the Council, Mr. Weisbrod-Weber and representatives of participating troop-contributing countries had an exchange of views."

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